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# STORIES ABOUT



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STORY TELLING

*Frontispiece*



# STORIES ABOUT:—

BY

LADY BARKER

Author of 'Station Life in New Zealand'

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS*



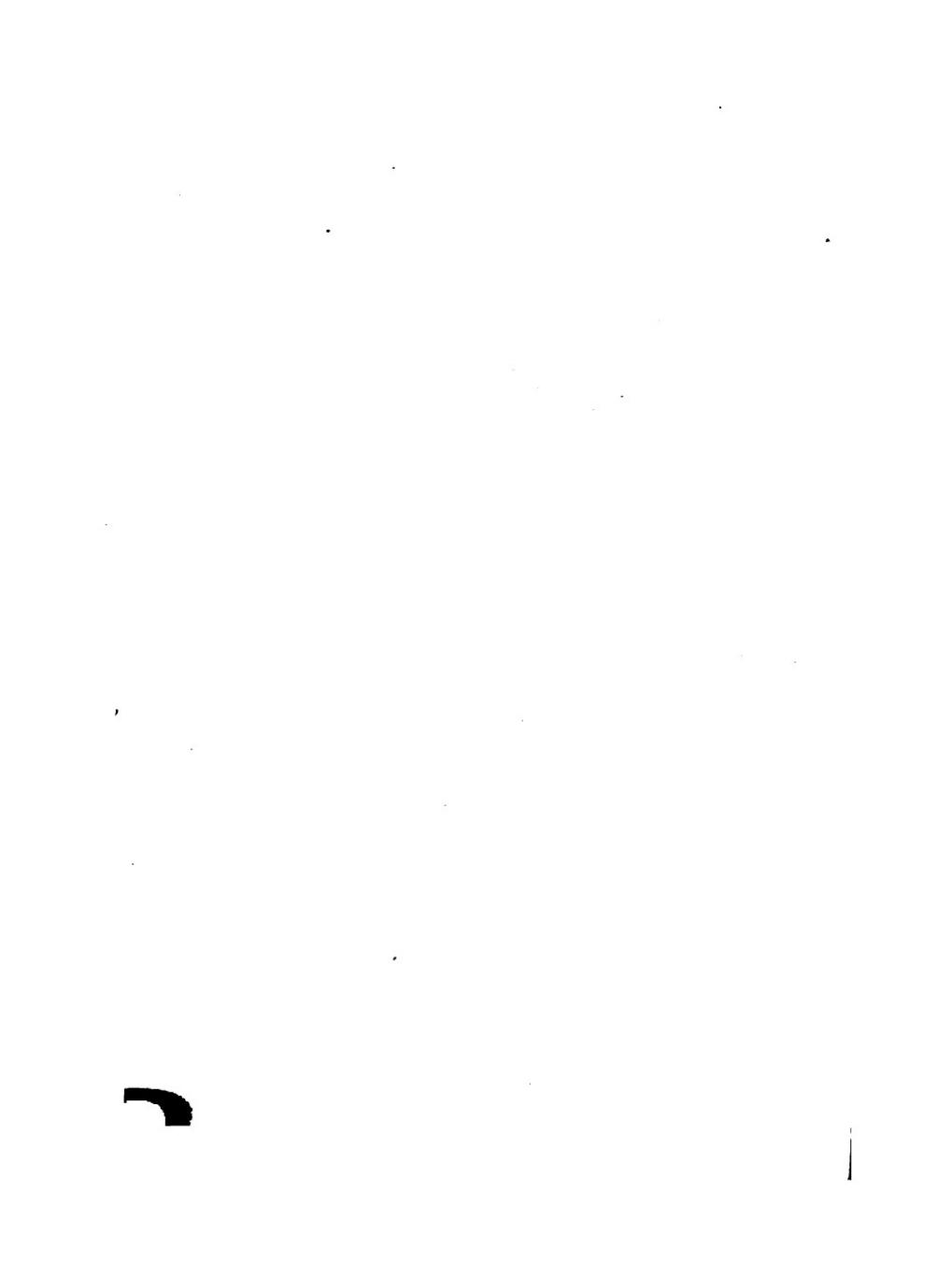
TURK AND JESSIE'

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1871

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*• • Of these Stories some are reprinted from the pages of  
‘Good Words for the Young.’*

### *ABOUT MONKEYS.*

I NEVER can tell a story properly unless there are several little listeners gathered round me, and I like to have one rosy-cheeked darling to cuddle up on my lap; so now we must fancy all these preparations made, a bright fire burning, before which we have settled ourselves comfortably, and we know that nurse is not coming with her fatal tap at the door (which must be instantly obeyed, remember) for a whole hour yet. I think I hear a chorus of little voices say, ‘Go on, please.’ What shall the stories be about to-night? Let me see; what do I know about monkeys? not out of books, or from other people’s lips; these will be monkeys of my personal acquaintance.

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In case any little boys or girls wish very much to have a monkey for their very own, I will first warn them by telling them of three attempts I made to set up one of these animals as a pet. My first monkey was brought to me early one morning at Lucknow, a great city in India, a few years ago. I had only been a fortnight in India, and about two days at Lucknow. The evening before, at a dinner-party, I happened to say how much I should like to have a monkey, and immediately four voices said, ‘Oh ! I will give you mine with pleasure.’ When I thought of this afterwards, it looked very suspicious that the owners of the monkeys should be so ready to part with them ; it seemed as though they had been rather troublesome pets ; but at the time I only felt how good-natured everybody was, and how much I should like to be able to accept all four monkeys ; but as this was impossible, I contented myself with selecting one whose master gave him an excellent character. My last thought at night and my first in the morning was one of joy and impatience to see my

new pet. It is the custom in India, as I daresay you have heard, to get up very early, so by six o'clock I was dressed in a loose muslin wrapper, and sitting under the shade of a beautiful clump of trees in the garden. The lady with whom we were spending a few days was with me, and we had some delicious coffee and biscuits on a table before us for our *chota-hasseri*, or 'little breakfast.' Our husbands had gone to a review, and we two ladies intended to be very industrious, and take a lesson in Hindostanee from a Moonshee with a long white beard. The old gentleman had not yet arrived to teach us, so I inquired whether my dear monkey had made its appearance, and heard that it was in the 'compound' or courtyard, and that its late master had sent the servant who always took care of it, in case I wished to secure his services. I wanted to have the monkey brought to me at once, but as the Moonshee could now be seen coming slowly up the garden-walk, looking very clean and nice with his snow-white

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robes and turban, Mrs. R—— persuaded me to wait till our lesson was over.

I am sadly afraid that, although I was big enough and old enough to know better, the poor Moonshee had one rather idle and inattentive pupil that morning, and I was very glad when the time came for shutting up the books with their dreadful crabbed letters, and Mrs. R—— kindly said, ‘Now, shall we send for the monkey?’ I need not tell you how eagerly I answered ‘Yes,’ to this proposal; and a few moments afterwards I saw a tall swarthy Indian servant approaching us, making low bows down to the ground at every step. He was leading a monkey by a chain round its waist, and carrying a plate in the other hand. I could not tell the height of the animal on account of its shambling way of half-walking half-crawling, but it turned out afterwards to be about as tall as the table; it was not quite black, but very glossy. When they were within two or three yards of us, the ‘mater’ (as that class of low-caste servant is called in India) said, ‘Salaam, Bob-

bee,' and Bobby put his black paw up to his forehead, and slapped it several times, bending low as he did so, exactly in the way the mater had been going on ever since he came in sight. It is the Indian way of saying 'How do you do?' or 'Good morning.' I was delighted of course, and thought Bobby had charming manners, but when he came closer I did not quite like his being so big and strong, or so very inquisitive; he did not seem in the least shy, but made himself at home directly, and when his servant put the fruit and cake which he had brought for him on the table before me, Master Bobby quickly climbed up and seated himself on my knee, as if he had known me all his life. As soon as he had finished his breakfast,—and he did not take long about it,—the mater took away the empty plate, and with many more salaams retired leaving Bobby still on my knee, very busy examining my buckle and ear-rings, pricking his fingers with my brooch, and every now and then stroking my hair. I was not at all easy in my mind, but sat quite still, and tried to

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conceal from Bobby that I disliked his company or felt frightened. After a little while he noticed some ribbon on my sleeve, and tried to pick it off with his finger and thumb, as if it had been a flower ; he next set to work diligently to roll up the wide open sleeve of my dressing-gown into a long narrow bundle : this he did very slowly and neatly, chattering softly to himself all the time. By degrees he got it all rolled up to my shoulder, leaving my arm quite bare. I sat patiently waiting to see what he was going to do next, when he gave a sort of yell, dug his nails and teeth into my arm, and tore it down to the wrist, leaving four or five rows of bleeding scratches on it. I jumped up with a scream, which brought all the servants out to see what was the matter ; not one of them would touch him, but some ran to call the master, who carried Master Bobby off kicking and fighting like a naughty child. He had fastened on poor Mrs. R——'s foot after I had shaken him off my lap, and was biting and scratching it with all his might.

In the meantime my arm was smarting dreadfully; it did not bleed much, but the pain was really very severe, and I had to keep wet cloths wrapped round it all day. The servants told us that the master had already confessed that Bobby was ‘very bad to Mem-sahibs,’ and did not like them at all; so after our breakfast I wrote a polite little note to his former master, and returned Bobby to him with many thanks. This was the end of my first attempt to have a pet monkey; he was only mine for two hours.

A year or so afterwards I was on my way back to England, and the ship stopped at Ceylon for a few days. I had been told that most beautiful little monkeys were to be bought there; and all the time we were at Point-de-Galle I tried very hard to find one to purchase, but it was too early in the spring for the young ones to be taken from their mothers, so there were none in the market. I returned, after a week’s absence on shore, very disconsolately to the ship without having succeeded in procuring a monkey;

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but the first person I met on board was the fat, good-natured old captain nursing tenderly in his arms a wee monkey of a beautiful tawny-golden colour, and with the gentlest, sweetest little face. The moment the dear old gentleman saw me he came up, and before I could speak, handed me the treasure, saying, ‘I knew you would not be able to get one at this time of year, and a friend of mine promised to keep one for me, so here it is for your very own.’ You may imagine how delighted I was ; this was exactly the sort of monkey I had always wanted, and I did not know how to leave off thanking the captain. For the next day or two I nursed and fondled my monkey incessantly ; it was very shy, and as quiet as a little mouse, but the most engaging gentle creature. Its timidity was not at all like stupidity, for it was very intelligent, but seemed completely dazed by the noise and bustle of a large steamer full of passengers. There was a squalling baby on board, whom it never tired of watching, I suppose because it was nearest its own size ; and

when this infant was on deck and set up one of its shrill shrieks, the monkey used to stop its ears with its tiny fingers, and look up piteously in my face, as much as to say, ‘What a horrid noise! ’

Unfortunately for my pretty little pet, I fell ill, and could not have the monkey in my cabin, but I was assured that the head steward, in whose care it was solemnly placed, looked after it, and reported well of its state of health. As soon as ever I could get on deck I asked for my monkey to be brought to me, but saw at once that something was wrong, for every one to whom I applied put me off with a different excuse ; so after dinner, in the cool of the evening, when our dear old captain came to speak to me, I begged him to take me ‘ forrad ’ (as the front part or bow of a ship is called) that I might find out how and where my monkey was. I could only walk very slowly, for I was weak still ; and whilst we were crawling towards the place where the sheep and poultry were kept, the captain told me there was a very large fierce monkey also on board called ‘ Jenny,’

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belonging to the crew, and that she had caught sight of my poor little darling, seized it in her arms, and that nothing would induce her to part with it for an instant night or day. She seemed very fond of it, but her affection was evidently so disagreeable to my little pet, that the sailors had watched her incessantly to try and get it out of her clutches; however, as she always vented her rage at these attempts on the unoffending monkey, whom she cuffed and shook heartily, the men thought it best to leave her alone, hoping she would tire some day of her plaything. When the captain and I came upon her she had my poor monkey tucked under one arm, and was skipping about the bulwarks. You never saw anything so forlorn as the little one looked. One of its eyes was bleeding from a scratch its nurse had just given it, and it went to my heart to see the melancholy way it put its little black paw up to the wound, and showed me the blood on its fingers.

Weak and ill as I still was, and armed only with my parasol, I determined at once to rescue my



monkey from Jenny's tender mercies, so I let go the captain's arm ; and though he and everybody else entreated me to take care, for Jenny was very ferocious when roused, I boldly attacked her, and fairly drove her into a corner where there were no ropes by which to escape up the rigging. I made up my mind not to care in the least for scratches or bites ; I suppose Jenny perceived that I was desperate, and, sooner than let me have her favourite plaything, she seized it by its tail, whirled it round her head, and flung it into the sea ! Oh ! how grieved and angry I felt. It was quite useless to attempt to save my poor little pet, for we were going full speed, and no one could see even where it fell : it must have been drowned in a minute. I fairly sat down and cried, and I should have liked Jenny to have been well punished ; but no one dare touch her, so she escaped to the rigging, from which she chattered defiance at us.

My third and last pet monkey was not mine at all ! Joey belonged to some one else in the house, but

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attached himself to me from the moment he arrived, as his friend and protectress, and I never saw any animal so fond of a human being as Joey was, and I may say is, of me, though he no longer lives in the same house, having been exchanged by his owner for a musical box! Since his departure from his first home I have been to call on him once or twice, and he is always delighted to see me, and cries piteously when it is time for me to go away.

Joey came last year from the great forests near Panama, and when I first saw him after his sea-voyage I thought him more like a little black imp than anything else. He was very small and hideous, quite black, with a white beard and enormous eyes; having lived in a rough box or cage on board, he had rubbed all the hair off his body and tail, and was very thin and dirty besides: he was made to undergo a whole course of warm baths on his arrival, which he hated; but they improved him immensely, and in a few weeks he became completely clothed in a coat of long glossy black hair, and as handsome as he



was capable of looking, which, however, is not saying much. Joey never was shy ; his intelligence and cleverness were extraordinary ; but it was impossible to make a pet of him on account of his incurably dirty habits, and his unceasing mischief. He was never still for a second, and *always* doing something wrong, and yet he was so inexpressibly ridiculous that no one had the heart to punish him ; he quite understood that he had been naughty, but he had a way of scratching his head when we were scolding him, and looking at us as much as to say, ‘Well, now, really I didn’t think that was any harm.’ Our home at that time was in the country, so Joey had a wide field for mischief ; and, as he arrived whilst it was still summer, he commenced some extensive gardening operations of his own at once, which resulted in depriving me of every leaf and blossom on my creepers. No chain could keep him confined ; it was merely a question of time. Joey sat down to consider how to get rid of every attempt to fasten **him** up, and his little clever fingers always contrived

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to free himself. He would eat or drink almost anything, but he was not at all greedy ; the food he liked best was bread and milk, but he took very little of even that. How you would have laughed to see Joey and his favourite companion the kitten sharing their morning meal of milk ! He soon taught the kitten that he was to have the first drink, and would lift the little cup up to his lips, take as much as he wanted, placing it on the floor for the kitten afterwards ; but whilst she was lapping slowly and with great difficulty, Joey would get impatient, and shake the cup to hasten her movements, walk all round her, tweaking her tail or nipping her fur ; but the kitten never stopped lapping, and when he could bear it no longer he used suddenly to drag her head up by both her ears, snatch away the cup, and either break it to pieces as the shortest way of disposing of it, or nimbly mount up on a table or chair and put it out of poor Pussy's reach. The worst of this play-fellow for Joey was that she wanted to play all night and sleep all day, whereas Joey never was still



for a second in the daylight, but, as soon as it became dusk, he rolled himself up in his blanket and went to sleep. He could not bear to be disturbed, and used to get into furious rages with the kitten, after vainly trying to persuade her to be quiet and share his blanket with him. I had to watch Joey incessantly on account of his love of hearing the crash china made in falling; the cook could not keep a cup or plate on the dresser—they had to be stowed away in drawers, and for several weeks Joey tried to get at a thermometer which hung outside the house: it baffled him for some time, but at last he discovered a projecting nail, round which he curled his long tail, swung himself up, and had the great satisfaction of making a splendid smash of it. Fortunately the only room in the house into which he would not venture alone was the drawing-room. On each side of the fireplace stood screens of stuffed Indian pheasants of bright and gaudy plumage. Joey was horribly afraid of these, and when I took him into the room never ceased clinging tight round my neck

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with one slender paw, whilst he covered his face with the other, and peeped at the birds with evident awe. One day I heard extraordinary sounds of choking proceeding from a bedroom as I passed it ; the door was closed, but not fastened, so I first knocked, and then, as no one answered, looked in. There was Joey seated on the dressing-table, with his head back, waving his long arms, his eyes starting out of his head, and at the last gasp for want of breath. I found he was trying to swallow a large signet-ring which he had found, and it had stuck in his throat ; there was enough of it in his mouth for me to take hold of, and I got it up with much difficulty ; but that was very nearly Joey's last trick, for if some one had not passed he must have died soon. He had previously put everything in the room which could be squeezed down its neck into the water-jug : the soap and sponges were there, so were several trinkets lying about and a small pincushion : the candles (he had broken the candlesticks) and a slipper were sticking out at the top.

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I must tell you one more amusement of Joey's, and that will be the last about him—for a wonder it was not destructive mischief. I missed him one morning, and spent at least two hours in hunting for him, feeling sure he was doing something very naughty by his being so quiet. I searched the house first thoroughly, then the stables, even the coal shed, looked into the washhouse, without seeing him, when just as I was leaving the last place I heard a very gentle chirrup proceeding from behind a pile of empty boxes, and I immediately went softly to see what he was doing. In one of the boxes was a quantity of feathers, and on these the old cat and her kitten had lain down to have a quiet sleep. Joey had found them out, and as they would not wake up and play with him, he amused himself as well as he could by covering them up with feathers; he had succeeded in hiding the kitten completely, and the cat's ear was the only part of her to be seen. Joey was doing his best to hide this also, but however gently he laid a small

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feather on it, the cat twitched her ear, and the feather came off. Joey hunted among the boxful for a still lighter feather and tried again, laying it down with the utmost care, but in vain. After many attempts he brought me one and made me try, but my clumsy touch had no chance when his tiny paw had failed. I left him still trying to cover that restless ear.

Now I think perhaps you would like to hear a little of monkeys who were not pets by any means. Whilst I was in India we went up to Simla very early in the season, before the houses were filled with people; and as the place is nearly deserted in the cold winter months, the monkeys, bears, and panthers get very tame, and I am told almost live in the verandahs of the empty houses. I never saw either a bear or a panther,—they betake themselves to the woods the moment they catch sight of any one more alarming than the two or three old watchmen who take care of the town for four months of the year; but the monkeys are not so



easily dislodged. Soon after I arrived at Simla, I had to complain to my ayah or maid, that every night the lamp went out, and it was not to be wondered at, for when I examined it in the morning there was no oil in it. In vain she protested that it was regularly filled—if ever I awoke the room was dark, and I did not like this, especially as, though it was an upstair room, and consequently safe from thieves, my window was open. I determined to watch, and saw a big monkey come in very softly at the window and blow out the light, then I could hear him drinking off the oil and smacking his lips over it. On another occasion I was told I could not go out riding because my saddle was unstuffed. As it was perfectly new, I was very much surprised, but it turned out that when my syce or groom was leading my horse with the saddle on, he had lain down to rest, taking the saddle off first, lest the horse should hurt it by rubbing. The syce fell asleep, and when he awoke

a crowd of monkeys were gathered round my poor saddle, out of which they had taken every bit of horsehair stuffing. I suppose in time they would entirely have destroyed it, but the lining was the easiest for their strong clever fingers to unpick first.

I had a little terrier who could not endure monkeys, and barked and chased them whenever he saw them. They soon learned to dread and hate him, and when Fury and I were out walking alone, pieces of dry stick, showers of leaves, and boughs of rhododendron blossom would come down on our heads, but Fury only barked and chased our assailants more ferociously than ever. One day the narrow path led through a very thick clump of evergreen oaks, with branches hanging low down on the path. As Fury and I were making our way under these boughs, a long skinny arm was stretched down, Fury was grasped firmly by his long hair, and carried off. I was in despair. I heard my poor dog's snaps and barks and yelps, but could do

nothing. The sounds mounted higher and higher, till at last I caught a glimpse of poor Fury handed about from one to another among a group of monkeys, who were pinching, and pulling, and buffeting him well. When they were tired of this amusement, and had tortured their little enemy to their hearts' content, they dropped him over the precipice, and there was an end of poor Fury at once.

But the worst trick the large mountain monkeys ('langours' they call them at Simla) ever played me was one evening when I had a dinner-party. I must explain to you that the house we lived in was placed on the top of a sharp-pointed hill, and the very little flat ground which remained after the house was built had been left in front of it, so that at the back, where the dining-room stood, there was quite a precipice steep down, with large rhododendron and oak trees growing against the side of the hill. Their trunks were out of sight, but the top-most branches came against the windows,

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and it was very beautiful to see clusters of bright crimson flowers almost thrusting themselves into the room.

I was very anxious that this, my first party, should be a pretty one, and instead of the heavy, old-fashioned Indian dinners, with quantities of food in big silver dishes, I had the table arranged *à la Russe*. I wonder if my little readers know what that is. All the meat and puddings and pies were to be handed by the servants, and nothing was put on the dining-table except pretty things. There were little white china boys holding baskets of fruit, vases of flowers, preserved fruits and bon-bons from Gunter's, all sorts of new-shaped goblets and water-jugs, &c. &c. I took a great deal of trouble to see all this properly done by my crowd of stupid servants, and when it was at last arranged stopped to take one more look at it before going to dress, thinking it was all as pretty and nice as possible. I desired one of the men to remain in the room, and went off quite happily to

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make my toilette. When I had dressed, instead of going into the drawing-room, I thought I should like to have one more look at my dinner-table, and went softly into the dining-room. What a sight met my eyes! No servant was there, he had gone off to smoke his hubble-bubble the moment my back was turned, and the table was surrounded by monkeys, who had got in by the trees which grew close to the windows. They had not contented themselves only with eating up my fruit and cakes, but they had upset the glass dishes, and smeared the preserves all over the table-cloth; they had broken the water-bottles, knocked the heads off half my little china boys; in short, you never saw such a mess in your life, and there they stood grinning and chattering, hardly moving even when I rushed at them brandishing my fan as if it had been a poker. I rang the hand-bell furiously, and that frightened them more than anything else. In a moment the old khansamah, or butler, and half-a-dozen other servants came up. I pointed to the table, for I was too

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angry to speak ; and the kansamah, bowing low, joined his hands, and tried to console me by saying in Hindooostanee, ‘ Pearl of the Universe, it is the will of Heaven.’ I could not stop to argue this point with him, as my guests were arriving, so I told him to get dinner ready in the usual way as quickly as possible, and went to the drawing-room feeling very much as if I should like to have a good cry over the ruin of all my pretty things. In conclusion, I may tell you that we did not get any dinner at all for more than an hour, and that it was extremely nasty when it came, for everything was over-cooked and spoiled ; so I think, considering all things, I have a right to feel angry with langours whenever I remember that unfortunate evening.

We have just five minutes more before nurse comes, so I will end with a short story my father told me, of something which happened many years ago in Jamaica. A new Governor was expected to arrive by the following steamer : he was coming from Demerara, where monkeys abound ; his wife

was very fond of these pets, and had sent on before her a large iron cage full of monkeys of all sorts and sizes, in charge of a servant. These animals created great excitement on their arrival in Spanish Town, especially among the negroes, who had never seen a monkey, and fancied they were inferior beings of the same class as themselves. The cage was fastened outside the 'King's House' (where the Governor was to live), and for a few days all went well. I must explain to you that the next house to this was one where the President of the Council lived, and was only separated from it by a large garden. Owing to the carelessness of the servant, the cage door was found open one morning, and the monkeys were disporting themselves in the President's garden, making sad havoc among his fruits and flowers. They were all captured after a little time, except one huge baboon, who climbed into a high tree, and hid himself so cleverly that he could not be found. When the coast was clear, Mr. Monkey came down, and set out on his travels,

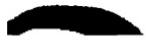
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making his first visit to the President. The black hall-porter was so astonished and alarmed at this unwonted visitor, that he hastily ran upstairs, the baboon following him closely, flung the door of the breakfast-room open, and said in trembling tones: ‘One lilly black genlemans to see massa,’ and then retreated as fast as he could, shutting the door behind him. Now the poor old President had only one leg, and his wooden substitute lay on a chair near him, for he never put it on unless he wanted to move about. He was very indignant at the impudence of his uninvited guest, who immediately began to help himself to the dainties on the table, and he flung his wooden leg at the intruder, never reflecting that he could not stir without its help. When my father happened to look in an hour afterwards he found the old gentleman speechless with rage, still helpless on his chair, and the monkey scrimmaging all over the room, upsetting inkstands, breaking china, and creating the greatest havoc among the President’s books and papers.



'ONE LILLY BLACK GENLEMANS TO SEE MASSA.'

To face page 28.



Now, there is nurse ; do you know those charming lines at the end of Miss Procter's pretty poem, 'The Comforter ?'—

So good night to my darling Effie :  
Keep happy, sweet heart, and grow wise ;  
There's one kiss for her golden tresses,  
And two for her sleepy eyes.

*ABOUT JAMAICA.*

## PART I.

I AM going to give you an account of the first adventure I ever had ; and, although it happened so many years ago, I remember all about it quite well. I was only six years old at the time, but it was talked of in the family for long afterwards, as you may suppose, and this prevented me from forgetting it. Then, by and by, as soon as the younger ones grew old enough to like stories, they would often beg their eldest sister to tell them the famous one of the ‘great upset.’ Since those days I have told the story many times to other children, and now I am going to repeat it once more.

~~I am not~~ I do not wish me to begin with

the geography or history of Jamaica, though I hope any little boy or girl who is interested in these stories will ask their papa to tell them where it is, and how it came to belong to us long ago, and that they will try to remember all about it. I will only say that it is a most beautiful island, with splendid scenery, lovely flowers and delicious fruits growing wild, parrots flying about the woods, and humming-birds flitting among the aloe-blossoms. But then, on the other hand, it is not nearly so nice a place to live in as our dear old England, in spite of her fogs and grey skies; for in Jamaica, as well as in all our West Indian Islands, the climate is very bad, except in the high mountains: there are earthquakes and hurricanes, snakes, mosquitoes, scorpions, and quantities of poisonous berries and blossoms. Children are seldom taken or kept there after two or three years old, and they have not the free out-door life of English boys and girls; for they are never allowed to go out except very early in the morning and late in the afternoon, on account of the

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hot sun, which would probably give them fever, or even kill them.

When I first remember Jamaica, we had been there only a few months. My dear mother was too delicate to live in England during the winter, and my father had been fortunate enough to obtain what was in those days an excellent Government appointment. It was the year that Slavery was abolished : I am always glad to think it was done away with before I knew anything about the country ; and the negroes, as I saw them, were only a good-humoured happy race for ever laughing and singing.

The 'we' I have spoken of above included, besides Mamma and Papa, a young aunt of whom we children were excessively fond, an English nurse, my sister, and myself. Jessie was about four years old, the prettiest little fairy imaginable, and the idol and pet of every one. I am sorry to say I was very ugly, tall, thin, and sallow, and a regular Tom-boy, besides being the most mischievous child in the

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world. I did not mean to be naughty, but it seemed so dreadful to be always told to be quiet. No one ever thought of finding me any occupation, and, as I was forced to seek it for myself, spending my time in a series of scrapes, I am afraid I did not choose proper employments. Lesson hour was the happiest part of the day, but unfortunately it lasted only a short while ; I used to envy the servants their regular duties, and whenever I read in little books of children being obliged to work hard for their parents, I thought it must be much happier than having nothing to do, which was my constant complaint. Our nurse could not at all understand this ceaseless activity, and often drew a mortifying contrast between me and gentle, pretty little Jessie, whom she declared was ‘a born lady,’ implying that I was just the reverse.

We remained in Spanish Town, the capital of Jamaica, where my father’s office was, until the hot weather set in, about March, and then we all got ill one after the other. Papa was looking out

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for a cottage in the mountains, in which to spend the summer, when a friend, who was going to England, offered us the use of his country-place in the centre of the island. The climate was very cool there, but to get to it we had to climb a high range of hills, and the lowest pass by which we could cross them was so steep and dangerous that it still kept the name of 'Monte del Diavolo,' or 'Devil's Mountain,' by which the Spaniards had christened it nearly 300 years ago. When the time came to start on our journey, the English coachman was too ill to accompany us. My father therefore drove the britschka; Joe, the black groom, was on the box next him; and inside sat Mamma, Aunt Nelly, the nurse, and Jessie and I. We had a journey of fifty miles before us, but the horses were very unwilling ones, and had just arrived from England: we therefore only travelled in the early morning and the cool evening, as they could not endure the tropical sun at mid-day. These horses had an unfortunate dislike, or dread, of the negro

grooms, and when we began to ascend the Monte del Diavolo on the afternoon of the second day, my father gave strict orders to Joe not to leave the coach-box on any account, but to take the reins, saying that he himself would go to their heads if necessary. You must know that the road was exceedingly steep, and so narrow that even a man on horseback could not pass a carriage. In several places a recess had been blasted by gunpowder out of the side of the mountain ; a negro mounted on a mule preceded us, and blew a shell loudly, to warn any country carts that might be blocking up the way to draw aside into one of these recesses till we had passed. Child as I was at the time, I remember the grandeur of the scenery, and how I jumped about the carriage from side to side, admiring first the steep cliff rising straight up from the narrow path along which we drove, and next the precipice, which sunk away almost from beneath the horses' feet ; the tops of the tall cedar, mahogany, and cotton trees were on a level with the

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road, and numbers of bright-plumaged birds flitted about among their branches. At the bottom of this ravine there sparkled what looked like a thin thread of water. I immediately begged for some to drink, and Mamma was explaining to me that what I saw really was a large river, and that its great distance below us made it appear to be only a brook, when my attention was attracted by the warning notes of the shell. Whilst I listened intently, Mamma tied the strings of my cottage-bonnet securely under my chin. You will see presently why I mention this. My little bonnet was very hot and uncomfortable, being exactly like those charity-school girls now wear; but in the days I write of it was quite fashionable. The hood of the carriage was still up, though the sun was sinking below the high hills towards the west, and I thrust my restless head beyond it to see what was going on. How well I remember it all! Just at that moment a second discordant blast came from the shell; the horses pricked up their ears and

slightly started, enough to send one of the hind wheels to the very edge of the steep precipice. My father encouraged them with both voice and whip, and all would probably have been right, if poor well-meaning but stupid Joe had not forgotten all his master's cautions. He jumped off the coach-box, and was at the spirited animals' heads in a second. At the sight of a figure dressed entirely in white with jet-black face, hands, and bare feet, the horses backed a little more, and the off hind wheel slipped over the edge of the precipice. What follows takes much longer to tell than it did to happen. The horses tried to drag the carriage up again, but in vain; every instant added to the weight. I can distinctly recollect my father's blanched face as I saw him fling down the useless reins and whip, and spring to the horses' heads to help Joe to drag them back by main force on to the road. We remained quite still and breathless where we sat. I remember the sensation of the carriage gradually slipping back and dragging the horses nearer the

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edge ; their frantic struggles—I saw them dig their front hoofs, as a cat might its claws, into the bank over which their hind legs had now slipped. That was the last I saw, for we heard a sort of scream from the terrified animals, mingling with the men's voices of encouragement to them, and I felt Mamma suddenly snatch me into her arms and fold me tight with my head buried in her breast. Then came a swift rushing through the air, which soon took away my small senses ; and I never can forget my amazement, on awaking from what I thought a deep sleep, to feel a soft weight preventing me from stirring. I must have made a slight movement, for Mamma gave me a little shake and asked me if I was alive. We have often laughed at that question since, but you must remember that our wits were rather scattered after such a fall. I assured her I was very much alive and anxious to get up, if she would only move ; which she accordingly did very slowly, poor darling, for she was a good deal bruised and shaken. I was on my feet in a second, and

rather delighted with the novelty and excitement. Mamma and I had fallen out on the first landing, as it were, of the steep mountain-side, not very far from the top. She desired me to tell her what I could see of the others, so I rushed about in great excitement and delight, reporting my observations. In a tall cotton-tree below us I caught a glimpse of the nurse and Jessie lodged like birds in the upper branches. I announced that nurse was lying quite still, holding Jessie's frock, but the poor little girl was kicking vigorously and crying to be taken down.

Papa I could see on the road above, with his hat and coat off, and literally tearing his hair out with his hands—the only time in my life I have ever seen any one do this. There were bonnets, shawls, books, &c. strewn all about, and I was particularly delighted to perceive a very smart embroidered parasol belonging to Aunt Nelly lying near me. I must confess to being very naughty indeed about this parasol, and I will tell you how. Mamma

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asked me if the carriage or horses were to be seen, but though I fancied there was something dark in the bed of the river below us, it was impossible to tell what it might be, and, selfish, naughty little girl that I was, I felt very anxious to get away from her with my prize, the parasol, which I had always been strictly forbidden to touch. I suggested, therefore, calling Papa to help Jessie and nurse out of the cotton-tree, and so escaped with the parasol tucked under my arm. Poor Papa was very glad to see me unhurt, and to hear that Mamma was also safe, and on my pointing out the cliff under which she was still lying, he prepared to go to her assistance first. Joe had been already despatched to a place where a detachment of soldiers was quartered in those days, about three miles off, with an entreaty from Papa to the commanding officer to send a cart directly to our help, and also the surgeon. The sun was now fast setting, and I thought with sorrow that my precious parasol would soon be useless, as there would be no sun from

which to shelter: but I determined to avail myself of the few moments left; so I opened it and strutted up and down the road. What a ridiculous little object I must have looked!—my frock, &c. torn to ribbons, my bonnet crushed quite flat, and now hanging down my back (the doctor said afterwards its thickness had saved my head from a frightful blow, as the straw was quite cut through in one place), and my thick shock head of hair all blowing about my face: think of the contrast of this little beggar-girl's appearance to a very smart light-coloured parasol embroidered in bright silks! I can distinctly remember my surprise at finding that my successful piece of disobedience did not make me so happy as I expected it would; on the contrary, my conscience began to prick me horribly. I seemed to hear a voice telling me quite plainly how wicked it was to take advantage of my poor aunt's absence to do what she had forbidden; in short, I was so tormented by the clamour of these internal reproofs, that I hastily closed the parasol and put

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it carefully on one side, resolving to confess my naughtiness as soon as possible. I must tell you here that I went about with this burden on my mind for many days before any one would listen to my penitent acknowledgment, and then I was fully and freely forgiven, and *never* wished to touch the parasol again.

I have only fitful gleams of memory as to what followed. I fancy I see dear Mamma sitting on some of the carriage cushions and leaning against the rocks by the roadside. I see Jessie in Papa's arms, choking and coughing, and I heard afterwards that in her struggles she had fallen from the branch which caught her head-foremost into the hollow of the old cotton-tree, and had been nearly smothered by a fine powder, caused by decay, with which the vast trunk was filled. Here I am going to make a little digression to explain something to you. The cotton-*tree* of which I have spoken is quite different from the cotton-*plant* which furnishes us with all our calico and our pretty cotton frocks. *That* cotton

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is the snow-white contents of a small pod about as big as an egg. First there is a bright yellow flower on the shrub (for it never grows more than eight or nine feet high), then a pod succeeds quickly to the blossom, and when this bursts the little tree looks so pretty with these tufts of cotton on it, each with some seeds inside. It grows freely in Jamaica, but is not cultivated to any great extent. Most of the cotton we use comes from India and America, and some even from the South Sea Islands. Now the cotton-trees, into one of which poor Jessie fell, grow in the forests and are as big as elms or beeches, and with very thick trunks. They also bear a pod full of cotton, but it is quite useless, though exquisitely soft and fine. In the first place, it is of a light-brown colour, just like a mouse's back, and in the next place it is quite full of little seeds the size of apple pips. Sometimes the negroes collect this silky down to stuff a pillow, but to pick out the little seeds takes so long that it is not worth much for other purposes. I hope you now understand quite

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clearly the difference between the cotton-tree and the cotton-plant.

We must go back to the slowly-assembling party by the roadside. Nurse was still in the tree, for, warned by Jessie's fate, she thought it better to stay quite still till plenty of help arrived, which it did in a wonderfully short time ; for long before we thought Joe could even have reached the Moneague he had returned, accompanied by every officer and soldier in the place, and a couple of carts with mattresses and pillows inside, and, best of all, some large stone bottles of water, for we were all dreadfully thirsty. How kind everybody was ! I can remember a big soldier attempting to tidy me a little, and saying, ‘ Why, little lady, you'll frighten your poor Mamma to death if she sees you like this ; ’ and he actually contrived to make me more presentable by arranging my hair, tying my sash properly, rough, kindhearted nurse that he was. But all these were trifles compared to the great anxiety every one felt about poor Aunt Nelly's fate. After a hurried search among



the upper terraces of the steep mountain-side and along the track of broken boughs caused by the rapid descent of the carriage and horses, it was resolved that a party of soldiers, Papa, and the surgeon should go quite down to the bottom of the precipice and search for her. I do not remember how long they were away, I only know I was very unhappy; for all my first excitement had died out before the real trouble and sorrow around me. I was so frightened to see Mamma's pale face and closed eyes. Nurse, who had been extricated from her lodging among the topmost branches of the tree, was giving her something out of a teaspoon, and whenever I came near she said, half-crossly, 'Now go away, Miss; pray go and play with Miss Jessie:' but Jessie and I had no heart to play; we were getting very hungry and sleepy, and thoroughly terrified at the position of affairs.

The most vivid of all my recollections of that sad afternoon is hearing a soldier say that he saw the exploring party returning, and he added, 'The young

Judy is alive too, I am certain.' I rushed off to Mamma with the news, but I suppose, as usual, I managed to tell it in the worst way, for my joy was damped by Nurse saying in great anger, 'There, Miss, you've made your poor Mamma faint again; now go away, do.' So I returned, just in time to see Aunt Nelly, who had been brought up in a shawl carried by soldiers, lying on the white dusty road, her pretty dress all torn and soiled, her dark curls dabbled in blood, the kind, smiling eyes closed, and her face as white as the handkerchief with which the doctor was preparing to make a bandage. I am told that I gave such a shriek of terror and dismay that my voice roused her from the long swoon in which they had found her; and nothing which happened yesterday is half so plain before me as her bewildered face, as she unclosed her eyes, and looked at me. To the surprise of every one, she almost immediately raised herself on her elbow—and, oh! how well I remember the deep, horrible cleft in her head which I then saw!—and, putting up the other hand to clear

away the blood which was streaming over her face, said feebly, ‘ My hair is getting into my eyes, I wish you would keep it away,’ and then sank back again. I think my story is getting so much too dismal that I must hasten to tell you she is alive and well at this moment, and the only lasting consequence of her terrible fall was that the hair which grew where the cut on her head had been turned quite grey. It does not matter now, for all the rest matches it, but for many years this long thick lock of silver was very conspicuous among her brown curls. Now that I have eased your minds a little, I will go back to that dreadful evening. We were packed in the carts and conveyed to the barracks, where everything was done to make us as comfortable as circumstances would admit of; but I do not remember much after my fright at the first glimpse of my dear pretty aunt with her head cut open. I have been told since that she had passed her arm inside the long strap at the side of the carriage, just as she knew we were going to have an accident,

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thinking to save herself from tumbling out; but when they found her at the bottom of the precipice she was lying near the dead horses, and the surgeon said he fancied the blow on her head must have been given by a kick from one of them. The carriage was broken into little pieces, so small that each bit could be carried up the hill again in a man's hand. The poor horses were frightfully battered and cut, but fortunately they were quite dead, and so was a little pet spaniel which I have forgotten to mention, and which had been lying under the box-seat during the journey. Our own escape was so marvellous, and we were so thankful to God for preserving our lives, that I never heard a regret wasted on either horses or carriage, though I mourned in secret for a long time over the sad fate of poor beautiful Whitefoot and Firefly.

Aunt Nelly lay for many days dangerously ill, and the moment she could bear the voyage Papa sent her, Jessie, Nurse, and me back to England, where we remained till I grew up into a tall

young lady of sixteen, when we returned to Jamaica and spent two very happy years there. Another time I intend to tell you all about our pets and the sort of life we led ; but before I finish for the present I think I must add one great piece of naughtiness which I committed before we left Jamaica with Aunt Nelly. The curious part of the story is that I had no intention of being naughty, nor any idea that my experiment would have been better left untried.

To make you understand how the idea came into my head I must explain that I was very tall for my age, whilst Jessie was extremely short. She was always longing and wishing to be as tall as I was, and asking everybody if they did not think she was growing bigger ; but still she remained a little fat dot of a thing, whilst Nurse declared that my frocks had to be let down an inch every week. I was very sorry that Jessie remained so small, and helped her to remedy the defect upon every opportunity. I had already got into trouble for abstracting a pot of pomade from Mamma's dressing-case. I

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hid it under my pillow, and as soon as Nurse had taken away the light at night, slipped out of my little bed, felt my way to Jessie's crib, and, with her full consent and approbation, rubbed her all over from her head to her feet with pink pomatum. I leave you to imagine the state of the sheets, &c. in the morning. When I was brought up for judgment and sentence before the authorities, my only defence was that I had heard Papa say, a day or two before, speaking of this wonderful pomatum, 'Why, I believe it would make even little Dot grow.' This was quite enough to determine me to try the effect on her. However, I was only lectured and dismissed without any punishment, but unfortunately with the idea more firmly rooted than ever in my silly little head, that it was my duty, to devise some way of helping Jessie to grow taller.

It must have been several weeks after this failure that, upon the occasion of a large garden-party in the afternoon, Jessie and I found ourselves wandering about the grounds of a friend's house, in our best

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frocks, waiting for the arrival of some other children who were to play with us. We believed ourselves to be very smart indeed; and so we were for those days; but I think if you saw two little girls playing in the square now, dressed exactly as we were, you would think they looked very odd. We had on very pale pink silk petticoats, over which were muslin pelisses—I remember mine had a frill round my waist!—pink drawn silk bonnets (hats had never been heard of for little girls), very big, hot, and uncomfortable, tied tightly under our chins, muslin trousers with lace and work round our ankles, and pink silk boots! Fancy running about the grass in pink silk boots. However, Nurse pronounced that we looked very nice indeed, and I tried hard to believe her, though I had great doubts on the subject. We were particularly told by her not to go off the smooth gravelled walks (on account of these horrid boots); so we considered that we were strictly keeping within the limits of the law when we followed a narrow path which led us round rather

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to the back of the house, among thick shrubs. Here we stopped to examine a deep hole which had just been dug for a large plant. There was a watering-pot full up to the brim standing temptingly near it, and also a spade. I cannot recollect what led to the subject, except that hardly an hour ever passed without an allusion to it, but I remember Jessie peering into the hole and saying wistfully, ‘Oh ! I wish I could grow like the plants !’ Immediately I felt a strong conviction that at last we had hit upon the only way to improve her tiny stature ; so I said eagerly, ‘Well, I don’t see why you shouldn’t, if only you could be planted : but perhaps Nurse might not like the trouble of digging the hole, or of watering you afterwards.’ These were the only objections which occurred to me ; and when Jessie timidly said, ‘I wonder if that hole is big enough for me ?’ I immediately felt that it would be absolutely wrong to miss such an opportunity of trying an experiment, so I urged her to get in. She did not want much persuasion, but jumped down into the hole—I think

I see her pretty little anxious face now, peeping out from the frightful heavy bonnet-cap of bows of ribbon and net which framed it. I asked her how she felt, and she said it was very cool to her feet; so I directly made up my mind to carry out the idea thoroughly, and assured her, as if I knew it to be a fact, *that* was the first symptom of growth, and I proceeded to tilt the big watering-pot with all my strength (for I could not possibly lift it), until a stream began to trickle down upon the pink silk boots. Jessie said, with a little gasp, half of fright, ‘ It’s very cool and nice, but I’m afraid Nurse won’t like it on account of my boots;’ so I comforted her by assurances that when Nurse saw how tall she had grown she would not mind it. Soon the water was all poured in, and it was too late for any hesitation about the fate of the boots, or of the lace frills of the little trousers and the skirt of her pelisse which were hopelessly splashed and muddy. We both felt quite reckless now, and I proposed to shovel in the loose earth, giving as a reason that plants required earth

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as well as water to make them grow. In a wonderfully short time I had really planted my poor little sister up to her shoulders, and jumped upon the earth to press it in, just as I had seen the gardener do. Jessie was wonderfully brave about it, and I encouraged her by assurances of my belief in her being a little taller already. However, it promised to be rather a long process, and I felt too restless to wait and watch ; so, entreating Jessie not to be afraid, but to be patient and quiet, I gave her a kiss and went away. No sooner had I lost sight of my victim than all my courage vanished, and my troublesome conscience began upbraiding me. I was in such a dreadful mess myself that I did not dare to go near the front of the house, but spent a dismal afternoon hiding behind the shrubs, afraid to go back to where Jessie was planted. At last Nurse swooped down upon me, terrible in her wrath, speechless with horror. Even my tongue was dumb when I saw poor pale little Jessie, who had been discovered, and with some difficulty dug up. I remember feeling

bitterly convinced that she had not grown in the least ; she appeared to be weeping tears of mud, for my gardening had splashed her face a good deal with earth, and her fast-falling tears melted it all. She was crying for the punishment which she knew would overtake me, much more than for her own misery and discomfort, and I certainly would have cried for myself if I could have foreseen that for three long days and nights I was to be locked up in a spare dressing-room. Nurse came twice a day with a large piece of bread and a jug of water, but her countenance was too awful for me to dare to speak to her. I was quite as miserable as I deserved to be, and the only ray of comfort I had was when Jessie managed to escape and rush to my door, flinging herself down in a perfect agony of grief outside it. We never had time for more than a word or two before she was recaptured and carried off; but I heard with additional sorrow that she was not supposed to be a bit taller, though she had been planted for three hours when she was discovered and released.

## PART II.

I HAVE no more pieces of naughtiness to relate, for at the time this story begins ten years had passed, and I had returned to Jamaica a tall young lady of sixteen. Jessie was, as you may remember, nearly two years younger; she had certainly grown taller, but was still only a little creature, with large dark eyes, which had a most beseeching look in them, as if she was asking everybody to take care of her. I have never seen anyone with such beautiful hair: it was dark brown, and in such quantity, that when she was sitting on an ordinary chair to have it brushed, it touched the ground. She was always singing, just like a bird; and it used to be a great puzzle to me how she could possibly remember the words of

all her songs. Jessie and I had one very decided taste in common, and that was our great love of pets of all kinds, especially of birds. Whilst we lived in England we never could sufficiently indulge this hobby, for the school-room maid rebelled against taking care of more than one cage of canaries, so we were obliged to be satisfied with that; but when we returned to our beautiful summer home in the mountains of Jamaica, we collected a little zoological garden around us in a few months, and it is about these pets I am now going to tell you.

I am sure you will like me to begin, as always, at the very beginning, so I shall first mention that, as soon as we were all settled in our mountain cottage, Jessie and I begged Mamma to allow our rooms to be changed to the only two which were downstairs. In hot countries the sleeping rooms are always upstairs, partly to be cooler, and partly to avoid the risk of venomous insects; but there was no danger of heat where our little summer home was built, for the nights were always cold enough to allow us to use a

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blanket ; and as for the scorpions, centipedes, ants, &c., we thought we could protect ourselves against them. We had discovered two charming little rooms side by side, downstairs, opening with French windows on a verandah, the pillars of which were covered with beautiful creepers : from this verandah you stepped on a lawn sheltered from the sun by a grove of orange and mango trees, towards the south-east, and beyond that lay the garden, which sloped down to a long valley, divided into paddocks of the tall, bright-green Guinea-grass (so called because the seed was brought from Guinea, on the coast of Africa), of which the cows and horses were so fond.

The chief reason Jessie and I begged for these rooms was, that the verandah and the adjoining trees would be so nice for all our pets, and after some hesitation and a great many warnings, against snakes, scorpions, and other insects, Mamma at last consented to allow us to change ; so for a few days we were happy, and busy moving all our absurd little possessions down to their new quarters, which had

hitherto only been used by gentlemen visitors, and were generally called the ‘Bachelor rooms.’ It took us some time to arrange our pictures, books, and ornaments to our own satisfaction; and dear Mamma was often called upon to give her opinion on our devices.

But the very first thing to be attended to was the comfort of the pets, and they certainly must have approved of the change. The parrots at once established themselves in a large tree, and we watched them with great delight clambering about its branches, nibbling at the fruit, and chattering incessantly. They were nine in number, and had been brought to us at different times in the nest some months before, when their beaks were quite soft, and we had to feed them on boiled rice and sugar. Nothing could be tamer than these birds were; when we sat down in our rocking chairs in the verandah, they used to scramble and flutter out of their tree, and come waddling towards us in a great hurry with their toes turned in, clambering up the arms of the

chairs in the hope of getting a piece of sugar cane. I am sorry to say, however, that not one of our parrots could speak at all well ; they whistled and chattered incessantly in their own way, but it was very difficult to teach them even a word or two, and their voices were thick and husky. It required a great many lessons before the cleverest of them could learn so much as a bar of one of Jessie's songs ; and when he began to practise, all the other birds had a most insulting way of stopping their own chatter to listen to his 'tra-la-la,' and going off into peals of laughter, mingled with the negro exclamations of 'Hi hi,' or 'My king !' This conduct affronted Master Bully—that was his name, bestowed on account of his tyrannical and greedy nature—very much, and he always ceased the song directly the laughter began, and sat sulkily ruffling up his feathers. They were all of the same kind, these parrots ; rather small, of a bright emerald-green colour, with a few red and blue wing feathers, and a gay yellow top-knot ; their beaks, were quite black, and so were their tongues.

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Their wings were cut to keep them from joining the flocks of wild parrots which constantly flew overhead. Their greatest enemies were the owls, who used to swoop upon the poor sleeping Polly and carry it off at night; we lost two in this way before we discovered the cause, but then we taught them to go to roost every evening in a large wooden cage under shelter of the verandah, the door of which was securely fastened, and our noisy pets lived to a good old age. It is the custom in Jamaica to have a cup of coffee brought to your bedside every morning at six o'clock, and as soon as our black maid 'Rosetta' had awakened us, she used to open the French windows into the verandah, unfasten the door of the parrots' cage, and place a saucer of bread and milk on the threshold where we could see it. In a moment all the parrots were round it chattering and gobbling it up; Bully had a bad habit of getting *into* the saucer and trampling the food into a mess, so Jessie and I were obliged to take it by turns to get up and drive him away and see fair play. As

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soon as they had finished their breakfast, they set off as fast as they could waddle to an enormous shallow pan of water, which was sunk to the level of the ground and filled twice a day with fresh water. It was such fun to watch them splashing and dashing the water over each other, enjoying their bath thoroughly ; then they betook themselves to the shelter of the trees, and there dried and pruned their feathers, spending the remainder of their time in eating fruit and clambering about. In the middle of the day they generally took a nap, and the quiet which reigned during that time was most remarkable.

We had also a cage full of love-birds, a sort of paroquet which comes from Carthagena in South America ; but though these pretty little things were very affectionate to each other and to us, I must confess they were rather stupid pets. They sat close together in pairs all day long, occasionally uttering a little chirrup and caressing each other with their tiny bills ; but they either had very delicate constitutions, or else they were very greedy, for they all died

one after another from fits caused by over-eating themselves and swallowing their food in a hurry. One love-bird of a stronger digestion than the rest survived some months, but he also had a daily fit in the middle of his dinner. I was so accustomd at last to this performance, that it was quite a surprise to me one day to observe him lying by the side of his little saucer longer than usual, and to find on a closer examination that he had shared the fate of his brothers and sisters.

Jessie's especial favourites among our birds were her own white doves, and certainly they were lovely creatures, so soft and snowy, perfectly tame, and never so happy as when nestling close to their beloved little mistress. I have often thought since what a pretty picture might have been made of Jessie, in her white dress, seated on the marble step of the verandah, its arch festooned with creepers forming a frame for her figure, her dark hair twisted into a thick coronet round her head, with generally a wild flower stuck into it, her guitar with its broad

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riband lying on her knee, and these white doves on her shoulder, listening apparently with great attention to her sweet voice *crooning* some quaint old ballad for the delight of the younger children who were seated on the grass at her feet. These doves met, however, with a most tragical fate, and I must tell you all about it.

Jessie always took their bamboo cage into her own room at dusk for greater security; and one night, just after we had all separated to go to bed, I was very much frightened at my poor little sister suddenly bursting into my room as pale as a ghost, and perfectly speechless with terror; she looked so horrified that my alarm was quite as great as hers, though I did not know what was the matter. She really could not speak, though she tried to do so, but seized my arm and dragged me towards her room, which, as I have told you, was next to mine, but with no door between. At first I thought Jessie must have gone suddenly mad, for everything there looked just as usual, and I could not see any cause

for all this agitation. She did not, however, let my arm go, but pulled me towards a recess where the doves' cage stood on a low table. There, indeed, I saw a horrible sight; a huge yellow snake, with loathsome black spots all over it, had forced its way in through the slender, elastic bamboo bars of the cage, and lay coiled up at the bottom, with its flat head raised, its forked tongue sticking out, and its small cruel eyes fixed on the only surviving dove. It had already swallowed one, and the end of the survivor was very near. Poor little 'Selim' was on the lowest perch swaying backwards and forwards, gazing at the snake; at last he sank slowly down, just as if he had fainted, and in an instant had almost disappeared among the coils of the horrid snake's body. I never saw anything so rapid as the way the reptile crushed the dear little helpless dove the moment it dropped within its reach. Jessie gave such a shriek that I feared the snake would be roused and perhaps escape, but he was too intent on his supper to mind us, so I took courage, and pro-

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posed to go for our old Portuguese butler, who I thought would know what to do. Jessie still clung to me, sobbing, and we found the old man's room, roused him up, and whilst he was dressing we remembered our schoolboy brother, who would be certain to enjoy a scrimmage at any hour of the day or night, and, in answer to our knocks at his door, he soon appeared, as quickly dressed as if he had gone to bed with half his clothes on !

When we returned with this reinforcement to Jessie's room, the dove was dead, but the snake had not yet quite swallowed it ; and here I must tell you how curiously it had prepared the poor little plump bird to go down its narrow throat. Those dreadful squeezes among its coils had broken all the dove's bones, and the snake had carefully licked its feathers the reverse way, so that instead of being a fat snowy ball, it was of a great length, and so drawn out that it was quite thin ; the snake was leisurely proceeding to swallow it, and we could see by the bulges exactly where the other dove was in

its horrid body. The old butler first cut off the bamboos which formed a sort of dome to the cage, and then he and Harry prepared to kill the half-gorged snake, but, before they struck the first blow, Jessie and I went into my room, as we could not bear to see it.

In a few moments Harry triumphantly announced that it was all over, but he seemed rather disappointed at the snake not showing any fight. It was not venomous ; none of the large snakes in Jamaica are so, being only dangerous to the poultry-yard, and particularly fond of newly-hatched ducks and chickens or even a baby-turkey. There is a very small snake, only two feet long, called the ‘whip snake,’ from its resemblance to the lash of a driving whip, which is said to give a poisonous bite, and is apt to make its way into cellars, as it is fond of a cold, damp place. I never heard, however, of any one being bitten even by this reptile.

I killed a very large snake once all by myself ; and, though it was quite by accident, I felt as

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proud as if I had performed a great feat of strength or valour. I was dressed for riding, and had my whip in my hand, but being very thirsty I went into the bath-room to see if the water in the great earthenware Spanish jars was any cooler than that in my bedroom. The walls of this bath-room were made of jalousies, which could be left open all night, so as to allow the cool air from the mountains to get in and make the water in the big cedar tubs fresh and nice for our morning bath. Whilst I was drinking some deliciously cold water very slowly and with great enjoyment, a large snake suddenly thrust its head through the open jalousies, and began greedily drinking out of the very jar from which I had just taken a tumblerful of water. It was so thirsty it did not perceive me at first, but in a moment it raised its head and hissed at me. I thought this so impudent that, without thinking I should hurt it in the least, I gave it a smart tap with my little riding whip. The snake shrank back, and I heard a heavy fall on the grass.

outside. Of course I immediately looked out of the window to see where it was going, but to my surprise it lay quite still, so I called Harry to back me up in case of danger, and we went to examine it nearer. It was actually quite dead. Harry was as much astonished as I was at my little blow having had such an effect, and he immediately proceeded to measure my victim, triumphantly proclaiming it to be over six feet long.

We used often to find the skins of these snakes in old stone walls, for they shed them every year, and the roughness of the stones helps the snake to pull its skin neatly off its head, turning it inside out like a glove. We generally found them quite perfect and unbroken : in this state they were very pretty, pure white, the little scales glistening in the light with all the colours of the rainbow, just as if they were made of the thinnest fibre of mother-of-pearl, and even the places where the snake's eyes had been were perfect little circles.

But now I must come back to the pets. The

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tortoises were very quiet, but not very amusing *protégés*; they lived in a little pond with some rock work in the middle for shelter from the sun. They were no bigger than half-crowns when we first got them, and they grew very slowly. We used to feed them twice a day with raw meat cut up into very fine pieces; at our whistle the tortoises would leave the shelter of their rocks and come paddling slowly towards us, looking out carefully for danger. If anything alarmed them they would draw in their queer little heads, tuck up their fins, or rather feet, and sink down to the bottom of the pond; but we generally took care not to frighten them, and they would eat their dinners very leisurely off the point of a pin. They all disappeared in time; and as we never could find any trace of their bodies, we fancied they must have contrived to escape and make their way to some of the very large reservoirs which were in the paddocks for the cows and horses to drink from, as there was no river near.

Then we had owls and hawks, and once we had a beautiful pair of Egrets given to us. We did not know what these birds were at first, as no one had ever seen any like them, and it was only by hunting through the picture-books about birds that we discovered their likeness under that name. They were flying overhead when some tiresome person, who happened to have a gun in his hand, shot at them, wounding the female, who fluttered to the ground, and her mate would not desert her, and was easily captured. They were exquisitely beautiful, though with fierce wild natures. Their legs were bright red and rather long, but their plumage was very peculiar—milk-white, and the feathers which composed their tails and their large crests or top-knots were fluffy, like marabout, or the down of the eider duck. We fed them on raw meat at the risk of having our eyes pecked out, and our fingers were soon covered with wounds, but we bravely persevered, and tried all the surgical art we possessed to heal the poor broken wing of the female

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but she only lingered a few days, and then died in great pain, I fear. Her mate became still more fierce and untameable, and we were afraid to let him out of his large cage lest he should share his wife's fate. He ate well and seemed healthy, but very restless and miserable, and we could only keep him alive for three or four months.

I must tell you how we came by our most favorite owl. One of the spare rooms had a large open hearth in it which was generally covered up by a board, and against this was placed a chest of drawers, as the fireplace was neither ornamental nor useful, for it was never cold enough to make a fire really necessary, even on the high table-land in the middle of Jamaica, where we spent our summers. However, after a week of heavy rain, Jessie and I took it into our heads that we should like to have a fire in this particular room. I really believe our only reason was a wish to see a blaze again, it was so long since we had enjoyed one; and as some visitors were coming in a few days, we

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pretended to be very anxious lest the room might have got damp during the late rains. Nothing was easier than to have some sweet-scented chips brought and some great dry logs of cedar, which made a delicious perfume ; and Jessie and I rejoiced in a splendid fire, though we were obliged to have all the windows open on account of the heat, and the fire was never replenished. We soon left the room, and one of the housemaids, who looked in on passing, thought the fire was quite out, as she could only see a heap of white feathery ashes, so she carefully replaced the board and moved the chest of drawers back again to its place against it. In a short time the house was filled with the most unpleasant odour ; we all began hunting about for the cause ; and although we tracked the smell to this spare room, it never occurred to us to have the board removed again until Mamma appeared on the scene and immediately had it taken away. I don't know which was the worst, the sight or the smell. The great draught caused by putting up the board must have

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carried some of the light ashes which were not quite extinguished up to the top of the chimney, where a whole colony of owls had built their nests for years past. The twigs and straw were soon ablaze, and as the bottom of the nests gave way, the young owls came tumbling down the chimney to meet a lingering death on the hot bricks of the hearth. There were owls in every stage of roasting; some quite dead, and others struggling among the hot ashes. They were more hideous to look at than you can imagine, for, at its best, a young owl is a frightful looking object, with its awkward unwieldy body, quite bare of feathers, with patches of down on it; and then its wide face and great goggle eyes blinking and staring at you. Whilst we were in our first moment of horror and disgust, another victim fluttered and fell down the wide chimney, but before it could reach the hot hearth Harry had rushed forward and seized it, so it was quite uninjured, and Jessie and I immediately took possession of the ugly little creature, making a great pet of it, and rearing

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it most successfully. As soon as it came to years, or rather weeks, of discretion we gave it its liberty, but ‘Moses’ always retained a grateful recollection of our care ; and if we called him at night when we saw other owls flitting about, he was sure to come to us and allow himself to be stroked and petted as of old. I used to like to bury my face in the soft feathers at the top of his head, and ‘Moses’ would perch quietly on my finger whilst I did this, only his claws became very long and sharp, and as he held on very tight by them to my hand whilst I was petting him, I soon got tired of having wounds all over my fingers.

We had also a cage full of ‘Cardinals,’ most beautiful birds with bright scarlet feathers. In fact, they were scarlet all over, their legs and even their eyes included. They were very healthy and apparently very happy in a sort of hut at one end of the verandah, with plenty of room to fly about, and, above all, a constant supply of water for their incessant baths ; whenever they wanted something to do they took a bath ! These birds do not belong to

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Jamaica, but are brought from South America, and so were our beautiful ‘Tropioles.’ Never have I heard such a clear sweet note as these last-named beauties possessed ; it had all the gladness of the skylark’s, as well as the sweetness of the blackbird’s. They were our only musical pets, and their song awakened us at daylight. They seemed very happy, and were quite tame, eating fruit out of our hands. Their plumage was magnificent, rich glossy black, and the most brilliant orange-coloured markings. Such bright fearless birds they were, about as large as a thrush, but of a much more graceful shape.

The last pet birds of which I am going to tell you were not at all successful. Outside our window grew a tree called the ‘sandbox ;’ its foliage is something like a horse-chestnut, and it bears a pod of a round shape, made up of the most symmetrical divisions like the quarters of an orange ; when this pod is ripe it goes off like a small pistol, and scatters the seeds all about. In spite of this disagreeable habit of exploding suddenly, the tree is

very popular on account of its deep shade, and on one of its lowest boughs Jessie and I watched a beautiful pair of ruby humming-birds build their tiny nest. They made it of tufts of cotton and an occasional horsehair to keep all together, lining it with down from their own shining breasts. Presently, during the morning absence of the hen, we discerned two eggs, exactly like little white sugar-plums, and for some weeks we never wearied of seeing the cock flitting backwards and forwards with a drop of honey in his long slender beak, for his mate's refreshment. He did not alight whilst he fed her, but would flit like a winged jewel towards the nest, and just hover over her for a second ; we could see the dear patient little hen raise her bill, which he touched ; then with a little cry he would dart off again into the brilliant sunshine. I cannot find words to tell you how beautiful the sight was ; one felt as if it was fairy-land, for such exquisite and tiny creatures did not seem to belong to this great big rough world of ours. Presently, after nearly three weeks of watch-

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ing, we saw the hen also very busy carrying honey, and then by gently moving a sheltering leaf we peeped in to see two little birds, each no bigger than a bee. Can you fancy a bee with a beak? for that was exactly what they were like. We asked the opinion of several people as to whether it would be cruel to take the nest as soon as the young ones grew a little bigger, and at last we very carefully cut the twig it rested on, and transferred the branch to a cage, which we hung outside our window, under an awning. The parent birds saw it directly, and flew in and out of the open door, feeding their young ones just as regularly, till their feathers came and they looked quite full grown. The papa and mamma now deserted them, and Jessie and I shut the cage door and tried to induce them to feed themselves with honey out of the same flowers from which we had seen their parents bring them their incessant meals; but no, they were either too lazy, or too stupid. We then endeavoured to feed them ourselves with honey, or with sugar and water, but we

saw in a very few days that it would only end in their death. They drooped and lost the burnished look of their plumage, so we very reluctantly opened the cage door, and after a few preliminary flutters our lovely little captives darted away into the free air. We watched them hovering over a bough of honey-bearing blossoms, and feeding themselves quite cleverly, and then they were off like a glancing sunbeam, and we never saw them again !

*AUNT ANNIE'S STORIES ABOUT HORSES.*

No doubt some of my young readers have ponies of their own ; but I am sure that even those who have not, like to hear stories about horses. Nearly all boys and girls in town or country have noticed in how many ways these strong and beautiful animals do good service to man ; most of us, even grown up people, take pleasure in watching a carriage go by with its well-groomed pair trotting proudly together, and have often admired the enormous creatures which drag with equal pride heavy carts and waggons. But you need not fear from this beginning that I am going to write you an essay upon the uses and habits of the horse, for you will learn

all this in good time from natural-history books, or, what is much better, from your own observation; besides, ladies are not supposed to know much about horses, and I might make sad mistakes if I were to write of them in this fashion. But though my horse-talk may not be quite as accurate as a groom's, still in my time I have seen so many horses of all sorts and sizes that I may perhaps be able to amuse you by some stories of those I have ridden or known; and I will begin with an account of our first steed ‘Grenadier.’

He was a shaggy little Shetland, no higher than the table, and more like a broad-backed Newfoundland dog than a pony. It was most absurd to see this tiny creature in its stall on a line with those of the big horses, and to read its name printed in large black letters on a white China tablet hung over its little toy manger; the name was so big, and ‘Granny’ (for we children soon shortened his name to that) was so small. He was an old pony when he was given to us, and so we could not expect to alter

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or improve any of his ways or manners. His chief peculiarity was his love of children : we must have teased him a great deal, yet he was always perfectly gentle and patient to us, allowing us to pull his tail, lift up his legs one after the other, creep under him, though we very soon grew too big for this ; in fact, he would let us children do anything we liked with him. But the moment a grown-up person approached, Granny's whole nature seemed to change ; his eyes gleamed with rage under his shaggy forelock, he snorted with indignation, and the groom used to declare he was always in terror of his life whilst he was feeding or cleaning the pony. I remember well how delighted my sister and I were at some one saying, after listening to the stable-helper's eloquent account of what he endured at Granny's legs, ' Why, my man, don't you lift him up and put him in the manger, out of your way, whilst you clean his stall ? ' It seemed quite possible.

One of my earliest recollections takes me back to

a summer afternoon in the country ; on the hall-door steps my father was standing with some other gentlemen, and they were talking about horses which were dangerous or difficult to ride. Grenadier's name very soon came up in this discussion, and my father sent for him. I think I see the little creature now ; a groom held the halter quite close to his muzzle, and he approached the group on the steps with many bounds and kicks, behaving in fact more like a lion than a discreet old pony, warranted 'very quiet with children.' He was so perfect of his kind that he excited a great deal of admiration ; but all the gentlemen agreed that he seemed anything but amiable. However, at last the groom was induced by the promise of half-a-crown to mount Master Granny, but I don't think he kept his seat for more than two minutes ; then one of the gentlemen tried ; and, lastly, my father, who was an excellent rider : but they all shared the fate of the groom, and were speedily deposited on the grass. By this time Granny had worked himself up into a

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fury, and would hardly let any one approach him : we were called to pacify him, and the moment we came near with our little hands outstretched, and our childish voices scolding him, Granny changed as if by magic, and first one and then the other little girl was lifted up and seated on the broad pad which was the only saddle on which we learned to ride. I can remember quite well the look of alarm on the gentlemen's faces, and their entreaties to my father not to be so rash. I believe they expected to see us both—fearless little creatures that we were—killed before their eyes ; but nothing was further from dear old Granny's mind than hurting us in any way. With Jessie and I clinging to each other, and to his shaggy mane, he ambled gently and carefully about the lawn, taking the greatest care not to turn round sharply, or in any way peril the very slight amount of balance by which we kept ourselves on his back. As soon as he thought we had ridden long enough, he deliberately walked to where our nurse was, and stood perfectly still while she helped us



MASTER GRANNY AND HIS PETS.



down; indeed, I am ashamed to say that my favourite mode of alighting was to scramble to my feet *on* the pad, and then with a whoop of defiance at my unfortunate nurse, to jump off, tearing or soiling my frock in this exploit. Dear eccentric old Grenadier! he died long ago at an advanced age, petted and tended to the last by his little child-friends; one of his tiny hoofs was mounted as an inkstand, with his name and age engraved underneath it, and for many years Jessie and I used to cherish the China tablet painted with his name as a precious relic.

The pony to which I was next promoted was called ‘Vic.’ He was much larger, but so very good and well-behaved, that I cannot find anything amusing to tell you about him; and we must pass on to ‘Alarm,’ a most beautiful bright bay pony with black points, the sole property of our school-boy brother. Harry was very proud of this animal, but it really was a most dangerous beast to ride. My father’s theory about ‘Alarm’ was, that in his youth

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he must have been cruelly beaten or knocked about; for although he was treated with the utmost gentleness whilst in our possession, his temper never improved, and up to the last he could not be saddled without first having his eyes bandaged, as the sight of the saddle always seemed to drive him nearly wild with rage or terror.

When once Harry had scrambled on Alarm's back, he contrived to stick on by the same wonderful power of adhesion which keeps sailors as well as schoolboys on horse and pony back, when, according to all the laws of gravitation, they ought to fall off.

I only saw Harry once pitched off Alarm, and then it was in so absurd a way, I must tell you about it. Jessie, Harry, and I were returning quietly home from a long ride, and at the turn of a lane we suddenly came upon a load of cut green grass by the roadside: there was no cart or anything near it—nothing but the soft green heap. Alarm shied violently at this, and absolutely re-

fused to pass it ; so Harry begged Jessie and me to go on first ; we did so, and then turned round to watch our brother's efforts to get the refractory pony up to the grassy heap. The groom entreated Harry to get off, and allow Alarm to be led past ; but of course he would not listen to this suggestion, and, by dint of sundry coaxings and pattings, Alarm was induced to approach the object of his dread. But Harry would not be content until he had made the pony go quite close up to it, informing us, with an air of superior wisdom, that 'that was the only way to prevent his being so foolish again ;' and at last he actually got Alarm's nose near enough to smell the grass. But it seemed as if the pony did not approve of its perfume, for with a loud snort he flung up his heels so suddenly and so high, that poor Harry turned a somersault in the air, and was nearly buried in the heap of grass ; whilst Alarm trotted off with his tail standing straight out, and arching his lovely glossy neck, as if he were very proud of having won the victory.

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Alarm's fate is unknown: he was sold, when Harry grew too big to ride him, to a gentleman who was very anxious to give him to his little boy; but, about three weeks later, his new owner returned to his home on foot, having started on Alarm's back, and announced that the pony had thrown him and then got away. For some days after this, fragments of the saddle and bridle were brought in; but poor Alarm was never more seen or heard of, in spite of search and inquiry. It was a very hilly part of the country, and we can only suppose that he fell down some precipice and was killed. Harry mourned long and bitterly for his favourite, and never ceased regretting having consented to part with him.

Before Alarm passed out of our possession he was concerned in a wholesale massacre, of which I must tell you. I was extremely fond of taking care of the poultry, and had just persuaded Mamma to depose an old woman, who used to look after them, and I reigned in her stead. But, alas! my subjects

died in the most terrible way, as soon as I assumed the reins of government, and I had an uneasy consciousness that, unless things improved very soon, the old woman would be triumphantly restored to her post. It was in the spring, when the turkeys were bringing out their broods, and the books on poultry-keeping, which I studied attentively, desired me to turn the young turkeys out every morning into a grass paddock, and to feed and shut them up again at night. Now there was exactly the paddock I wanted close to my poultry-yard, and into it I turned my turkey-hens, each with twelve or fourteen dear little chicks, crying ‘twee-twee-twee’ around her. When the time for shutting them up arrived, the turkey-mothers all answered my call, but they returned with only one or two chicks each, and looked disconsolately about them for the remainder. This was very dreadful, and in the course of two days I had lost about fifty baby-turkeys. I searched the paddock carefully, and found several flattened little bodies, but with no mark of

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a bite on them. There was nothing in the paddock except Alarm, and he, I thought, was perfectly quiet and harmless. I was in despair, and next morning prepared to spend the whole day sitting under a tree to watch what befell my last batch of young turkeys. Presently my attention was attracted by seeing a hen turkey, with outstretched wings and loud cries, flying at Alarm's legs; it seemed very odd that she should assault the pony in this way without any provocation, so I came softly up behind him, and arrived just in time to see his uplifted foreleg descend on a youthful turkey, crushing it quite flat and dead with one pat. Yes! this was the way in which Alarm had amused himself for some days past, the result being, that out of at least a hundred fine healthy young turkeys, I had only about ten left. The worst of it was, that no one pitied me. Harry evidently thought it very clever of Alarm to devise this amusement; the old woman told Mamma I ought to have had the coops placed in the paddock, so as to keep the chicks with-

in bounds ; and the end of it was that I had to resign my place !

After I grew up, my wandering destiny led me into many countries, and it so happened that, in the course of my travels, I had to ride a great deal, and became acquainted with horses of various tempers and tricks ; yet, with all this practice, I could not ride at all well. I was always frightened, never feeling quite at home on horseback. I do not like riding : perhaps for the reason that I have had too much of it all my life. Riding for pleasure, as you do in England, is very different from being obliged to take a long ride every day, and having no other means of getting about than on horseback ; and then, in these foreign countries, the horses are generally only half-broken, and would not here be considered fit for a lady to ride.

One horse I was obliged to ride used to lie down in water, whenever we came to a river or brook, which was every day in the course of a long journey of several hundred miles. ‘ Claude ’ used to double

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up his legs at what he considered was a suitable place in the stream, and lie down deliberately for two or three minutes. It was so impossible to prevent him from doing this, that at last I looked upon it quite as a matter of course, and jumped off as soon as he showed the first symptom of a wish for a bath. By this means I seldom got wet much above my ankles; whereas, if I remained on whilst he lay down, he always tried to roll, and I got my saddle spoilt into the bargain. If Claude had done this only with me, I should of course have thought it was my bad riding; but he went through the same performance with excellent riders on his back, and quite regardless of all the chastisement they gave him. I must say I was delighted to find he was just as tiresome with other people.

During this long journey I rode several horses at different times: sometimes, if the stage was a very long one, and had to be accomplished quickly, we changed horses in the middle of it; and upon one

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occasion, just as I had mounted my second horse, and before I had gathered up the reins, or got my knee over the pommel of the saddle, he jerked his head free in some mysterious way, leaving his bridle in the hands of the groom who was holding him, and bolted home as hard as he could gallop! I held tight on with one hand to the front and with the other to the back of the saddle, and on we flew for seven or eight miles. We were not long about it, I can assure you, and we went so fast that everything appeared to be racing past us. My hat came off, my hair tumbled down my back, and I must have looked like a lunatic, sitting or rather clinging in this extraordinary way, with a very pale, scared face and bare head. At last we reached the place from which we had started; it was quite deserted, so I slipped off 'Rajah's' back, went into the verandah and sat down, feeling most dreadfully shaken and frightened. There was no one there to look after the horse; but I was so disgusted at having all the way to go back again, that I did not care

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what became of him, and left him to his own devices. Presently I heard a great noise on the floor of the verandah, and there was Rajah coming to look for me, poking his pretty grey nose into my hand for his accustomed lump of sugar! Did you ever hear of such impertinence?

There never was his equal for bolting; once he bolted with me at an inspection of cavalry, taking offence at the sudden flashing of the soldiers' sabres as they drew them to salute their inspecting officer. I must acknowledge it was rather startling; but the worst of it was that the horse upon which was mounted one of the high officials assisting at the ceremonial, bolted too, and the faster Rajah flew with the bit between his teeth and his tail standing straight out, the more the other horse tried to overtake him. It was a regular race for four miles, and I had no breath left at the end of it, for the pace was tremendous; nothing but a thoroughbred Arab in good condition could have kept it up so long: but I did not feel afraid of tumbling off upon that

occasion, for I was fairly in the saddle, and had nothing to do except—as a dear little boy once said to me—‘stick on like a plaster.’ The ride back was very disagreeable, for my fellow-runaway was dreadfully sulky, and evidently thought the misadventure my fault, whereas I considered that if he could have pulled up his own horse, Rajah would have stopped much sooner.

But running away is nothing to kicking. I had once to ride a horse who never saw a pony without wanting to fight him ; he used to paw at them with his forelegs and try to bite them ; or, if he could not do that, he would make a grab at the poor rider’s leg, and often give it a nip. Whilst riding him, I did not dare to take my eyes off his ears ; for when he laid them back, and I could see him trying to find out if I was watching, I knew what was coming. He would stop dead short in the middle of a canter, and begin to kick or suddenly dart across the road to bully another horse ; fortunately, ‘Afreet’ had a tender mouth, so if I was on the watch, and could

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get his head well up in time, I had some chance of stopping his little game.

But as a contrast to all these horses I have been telling you about, who were the reverse of the proverb about ‘Handsome is, &c.,’ I must give you a short memoir of ‘Jack,’ who was not at all handsome, but who was the most clever and sensible animal I ever knew, as well as the most hard-working. I made dear old Jack’s acquaintance out in New Zealand three or four years ago, and I am happy to say he is still alive and well, gradually sinking into a green old age, beloved and respected by all who know him. Jack did not belong to any one person in particular: on the station where I lived he was called a ‘station screw,’ and was used by all who wanted him. Now I don’t exactly know what a ‘screw’ means. I believe it is something unkind when applied to a horse; but I know that whereas the more valuable horses used occasionally to meet with accidents, or have some ailment, Jack was *never* ill or unable to do what was required of him. I am

afraid Jack's exterior was clumsy and rather of the plough-horse kind; but then he could go like 'Eclipse' on an emergency; you could ride him all day; he would carry you a long weary journey, and when grander horses would be too tired to eat, Jack would calmly munch his oats as if he had not been a mile away from home, and look as fresh as a daisy next morning. If ever I have to ride in a circus, I will send for Jack! Any one could stand up on his back and jump through hoops or perform feats of agility, and Jack would canter or walk steadily round and round all the time. I have often ridden for miles on Jack with the reins knotted on his neck, and my hands in the pockets of my jacket to keep them warm. When my own showy mare was laid up, I rode Jack. If any one wanted to look for a stray horse or cow, they rode Jack. If a horse was wanted on a pinch to draw a cart or even a dog-cart, Jack was 'all there.' If mutton was wanted from the home station, 'Where is Jack?' was the first question. Other horses were very difficult to catch, but

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Jack walked confidingly up to you when he saw the halter in your hand. One defect he had, and only one ; he certainly was very greedy. Jack would do anything for a feed of oats. He has been known to eat his own feed and that of two other horses also ; and as for a haystack, Jack scented it miles away, and no fence could keep him out ; at least no New Zealand fence, for they are only wire railings about three feet six inches high, and Jack quietly and cautiously steps over them, one leg at a time. I saw him caught in a fence once, as he was getting over it into a paddock of beautiful clover, and instead of struggling, he stood perfectly still ; and when he saw me in the verandah, he whinnied to attract my attention, knowing I would come and help him at once.

Jack preferred a steady, sober pace, but upon occasion he could go very fast, as I will tell you. The horses in New Zealand are seldom or never kept in stables or even in paddocks, but roam all over the 'run,' in what are called 'mobs ;' that is,

several of them together. If a horse is wanted out of the mob, the only way to get it is to drive all the others, as well as the one you require, into a stock-yard, or enclosure made of strong, high posts and rails. On these occasions I generally begged to be allowed to help, for the sake of the pleasant ride on a lovely afternoon among the hills, and the excitement of finding the mob and driving them into the stock-yard. The horses were often very difficult to catch. If one saw us coming, perhaps he would give the alarm, and the whole mob would set off up the gorge of a river, or over a steep hill-pass, and we would have to go round a long way to turn and drive them back. The gentlemen of the party carried stock-whips, which they cracked from time to time, the report echoing among the quiet lonely valleys like that of a pistol. Sometimes I rode my own mare, Helen, but the galloping and shouting used to excite her very much, and it was all I could do to take care of myself when I was on her back; so I preferred dear, quiet, old Jack,

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whenever he was not wanted for the real business of the expedition ; generally, however, he was in great request, as he was one of the best 'stock-horses' in all the country-side. Upon this occasion we had found the mob without much trouble, driven them into the stock-yard, caught the chestnut pony which was wanted, and were all returning quietly home in the gloaming, enjoying the beautiful sunset, and the fresh, sweet air which steals down the glens after a hot summer day. I was on Jack's back, ambling gently along, when suddenly a wild cat started up under our feet and bolted into a large, thick bed of fern close by. In a moment the gentlemen were off their horses and, with many shouts and yells, were trying to help the dogs to get poor pussy out of her cover. I offered to hold the chestnut's flax bridle, but my assistance was declined, and the sort of leading rein (also made of flax) was securely fastened to the stump of a Ti-ti palm close by. Jack evidently distrusted this arrangement, or else he knew more of the chestnut's sly tricks than we did. At all

events, he edged up to where the horse was hitched, and stood quite close to him, watching every movement attentively. And it was well he was so careful, for in the most exciting moment of the cat-hunt, when everybody's attention was engaged, the pony threw up his head, gave a violent plunge and a pull back at the same time; a badly tied knot in the flax halter gave way, and off he flew like the wind to join the other horses, which were feeding in a large mob just in sight, at the entrance of the gorge of a river.

Before I knew what had happened, Jack was off after the runaway. Never have I been carried at such a pace. Jack did just as he liked; instead of going warily and carefully over the rough country, he jumped every hole or prickly bush which came in his way, to save the time required to go round it; when we reached a creek, instead of discreetly seeking for the best place at which to cross it, Jack scrambled down its steep, crumbling banks, splashed through the water, and was up the other side like a

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cat, and on again, watching every turn of the chestnut, who was doing his best to join the mob, with them to make a final bolt up the gorge and escape us for that night. Jack felt bound in honour to prevent this, so he laid himself well out to his work, and with the most wonderful instinct availed himself of every inch of ground by which he could gain the entrance to the gorge before the mob. He not only succeeded in heading the horses, but actually turned them into the stock-yard close by; and when I recovered my presence of mind, I found myself still on Jack's back, who was standing *across* the open place where the slip-rail ought to have been put. He quite understood that I was incapable of jumping off and getting the long pole into its proper position, so as to keep all the horses in, and therefore he took this duty on his own shoulders. How he shook himself when we had reached this point! I was already jolted nearly to death, for I am bound to say that dear Jack's paces were very rough when he galloped fast, and to be shaken violently directly after such a

skelter was too trying. When the gentlemen came up, they could hardly speak for laughing, at which I was much affronted, for I felt we deserved great praise for our exertions; but it seems that we looked very absurd, tearing along like a whirlwind (both Jack and I being ordinarily very quiet and deliberate in our movements), jumping all obstacles, disappearing sometimes in the bed of a creek, and finally gaining the victory single-handed against some twenty horses.

I have one more story to tell you, and it takes me back again to the time when I was a little girl. My father came home one day, and announced that he had bought a very handsome horse to go in single harness. First of all we inquired what colour he was? A bright bay. Then we asked about his mane and tail; and lastly, some practical person demanded what price was to be paid for 'Tom.' I well remember the astonishment when my father said how very little his owner asked for him. Of course, the next question was, 'Is he sound?' 'Oh yes, he is all

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right,' Papa said ; 'but he has fits of obstinacy, and stands quite still for hours : however, I don't think he will try any of his tricks with me.'

In due time Tom came home, and a very handsome horse he was, large and powerful, with splendid action, and very showy. I had overheard the gentlemen talking together about his having 'a sullen eye,' and I immediately flitted off to the stable to see what this sort of eye was like. To my disappointment, Tom's eyes were just like those of all the other horses. Every morning, Papa used to take Tom out in a sort of light gig, with a groom by his side. I anxiously inquired how Tom had behaved ; the answer was always the same, 'Perfectly well.' There was nothing I liked so much in those days as going out with my father for a morning drive, and at last, after some weeks of excellent behaviour on Tom's part, and earnest entreaties on mine, I was allowed to accompany Papa again. Tom went as peacefully as a lamb ; he was often tried by having to stop to allow a gate to be opened, but he never

minded this check, and went on amiably afterwards, until one unlucky day, when Papa and I were alone. We came to a large white gate—how well I remember it now ; I jumped out to open it as quickly as possible, so as not to try Tom's temper ; but running past him to scramble up again to my perch, I saw at once what they meant by a sullen eye. It was a look of sheer rage and obstinacy, such as you would not believe a horse could assume. It did not surprise me to find that Tom made no movement in reply to Papa's 'click.' First of all, kindness and petting were tried ; I did what I could to help by coaxing and patting. Tom stood as if he were carved out of wood ; then my father beat him ; Tom never winced. I remember Papa's laughing at my suggestion that we were in fairy land, and that a wicked enchanter had turned Tom into stone. It really seemed like it, for time passed and Tom was motionless. The whip was broken, and my father's arm was tired ; still Tom did not stir. At last, when no one was touching him, he gave a sudden bound into the air,

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all four legs off the ground at once, and fell between the shafts, which snapped short off, sending Papa and poor little me flying into the dusty road. As soon as we had picked ourselves up and found we were not hurt, we went to Tom, who was lying perfectly still, with some blood on the dust by his head. He was quite dead ; and after I grew up, and reminded Papa of that adventure, he told me that a veterinary surgeon examined poor Tom's body, and found that he had burst a large vessel in his heart, from rage or indignation, we don't know which. I was so sorry for Tom !

I have now told you all the horse-stories which I can remember, and must try to think of something else to amuse you with next time.

*FOUR MONTHS IN CAMP.*

I DARESAY many of my child readers think that it must be delightful to live in a tent. And so it is; for a few years ago I passed four months under canvas, and found them very pleasant, especially as the tent was moved to a fresh place every day. There are so many railroads in India now, that I suppose the marching of troops from one end of the country to the other is given up; but, at the time I write of, there was no other way of transporting them, and a regiment or an army sometimes had to make a journey of one or two thousand miles. We, who live in a little island, can hardly imagine how vast a region is even one Indian province. If you look at the map you will see that all England might be laid

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down on the plains of Bengal, and leave a margin as large in proportion as your little hand would leave, if laid down on this page.

I shall begin the story of my tent-life from the evening before I joined the camp, a day's march from Lucknow. First, you must know that I had arrived from England only two weeks before, and consequently knew nothing of the language or the ways of the people. Now I expect you to get the map, and find Lucknow in the north-west province of Oudh; then we can make the journey together,—it will take us right up to the Himalaya mountains, and I hope to be able to amuse you by the way.

We had been staying for three or four days at Lucknow, having travelled thither from Calcutta partly by railway, and partly in a most uncomfortable and jolting carriage, like a very bad cab, in which we slept at night. Glad to think this kind of journeying over, I looked forward eagerly to my first glimpse of the white tents which were to be our home for some time. But before we joined the

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camp, there was a great deal to be done in the way of buying things, hiring servants, and making various arrangements for our comfort, and you must remember that I knew nothing at all about what was wanted, and had every moment to ask some kind person's advice, just as you would be obliged to do. The camp which we were ordered to join was composed of five thousand soldiers, who were to take what was called 'a military promenade' from one end of Bengal to the other, to see that the country was quiet, the forts in good repair, and the various garrisons doing their duty properly. We marched in great state, for the Commander-in-Chief was with us, and all the heads of departments. There was an immense number of servants and *kelasses*, or men to pitch the tents every day. I have heard that the camp numbered more than ten thousand people, though barely half of them were soldiers; there were only four ladies, including myself!

Fortunately for me, the lady with whom I stayed at Lucknow had made just such a journey only the

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year before, so she told me exactly what was best to do and to buy, and great fun I thought it making such odd purchases. First there was the cook to be hired: he required several assistants, a little cart drawn by bullocks to carry all his pots and pans, and a wire-gauze safe to keep his provisions in. Poor man! he had no kitchen, and yet he used to send us up capital meals three times a day. All we had to do was to pay his daily bill; everybody took it for granted he cheated us immensely, but still I think it was very clever of him to manage so comfortably. We were allowed a certain number of camels and elephants to carry our tents and baggage, but the odd thing was that we had to buy two sets of everything, even two sets of pretty blue and white cotton carpets; these were made just like the Turkey carpets you probably have often seen, only of cotton instead of wool; they could be easily washed whenever we came to a river, and were besides much cooler and lighter than an ordinary dining-room carpet. Two sets of basket chairs had to be bought,

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with cushions of picked cotton, and pretty chintz covers to fit them; two sets of beds, of jugs and basins, cups and saucers, plates and dishes; our clothes, brushes, combs, books, &c., all had to be divided into two sets, and packed in two sets of camel trunks. The only things from which we never intended to part were a despatch-box and my travelling-bag; that was given into my ayah's care, which reminds me that we had to buy a light sort of palanquin for her, and to provide two sets of bearers to carry it.

I, thinking it would be so very hot in India, had left all my winter clothes behind me in England; but I had to buy plenty of flannel and warm stuffs at Lucknow, for everybody assured me the cold would be intense early in the morning and late at night, and so it was. Whilst at dinner in the tent, I often had to send for a thick shawl to wrap myself up in. Among our servants was an excellent *durzie*, or tailor, who made all my clothes and mended everything. Nothing affronted him so much as to

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even see me sew on a button to my glove; he thought it was a reflection on his industry. He worked very hard during those few days at Lucknow, and got my wardrobe into excellent marching order by the 12th December, the day fixed for our joining the 'Head-quarters Camp,' at a place called Byram-Ghât, about thirty miles from Lucknow. We did not start until late at night; all day we were busy superintending the packing and seeing off all our worldly goods. I took especial delight in watching the loading of the camels; they were brought up to the verandah at the back of the house, and there made to kneel down and have their pack-saddle put on. Then came trunks, whose weight was evenly balanced on each side; a charpoy, or light bamboo bedstead, was fastened on the top; upon this sat the camel-driver, guiding his steed by means of a string rein fastened to a little bit of wood stuck through its nose. The camels made a great fuss about their loads; they gurgled and groaned in the most heart-rending manner, and I was very sorry for them,

until I saw what a bad mother one of them was. She had a dear little baby camel, and she was dreadfully unkind to it, biting and kicking it whenever it came near her. Just as she was going to start, having had a very light load put on her saddle, the camel-driver gently threw the little camel down, tied its legs with an old turban of his own, and finally had it lifted up and laid on the charpoy behind him ; so the unkind mother had to carry her child after all, against her will, I daresay.

I must not forget to tell you about the pets, who had a servant all to themselves. There was a beautiful parrot, a small cage full of Java sparrows (who, by the way, are the stupidest little creatures in the world), and another of paroquets from Ceylon. These were sent on with their attendant, but I kept my latest favourite to travel with me. It was a most beautiful thoroughbred Persian cat, as white as snow, with long silky hair instead of short fur ; she had also two white knobs hanging down by her jaws, one eye was blue and the other green, all

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of which characteristics belong to the true Persian breed. She was large and powerful, but as gentle and playful as a kitten. My difficulties with this animal began at once, for no sooner was I packed into the palanquin in which we were to make our journey from Lucknow to the camp, than Miss Pussy discovered some cold pigeon, which my hostess had kindly put on the little shelf inside the palkee (as palanquins are generally called); and when I wanted my early breakfast at six o'clock, the coffee was forthcoming, but neither the bread nor the pigeon was to be found. Pussy did not attempt to deny the robbery when taxed with it, but sat licking her paws with a self-satisfied and contented air. I must explain that Puss only answered to the name of 'Billy,' although she was a most elegant young lady; but a word which has something of the same sound is Bengalee for cat, and she had no other name. I think I shall tell you her fate here, so as not to interrupt my story when once we get fairly into camp. She was very good and quiet during the

day, and slept contentedly on my lap, or curled herself up like a white heap on my writing-table ; but at night she was as bad as a teething baby. Not a wink of sleep would she let me have ; mewing, purring, jumping up on my bed to awake me, begging me in the most earnest cat language to let her go outside the tent, and play in the moonlight. I was warned not to allow her to do this, and of course I ought not to have given way ; but at the end of a week I was so tired of these disturbances, that I got out of bed, pulled up the fastening peg of the tent-door, or rather curtain, and out poor Billy bounded, with a little cry of joy, into the bright moonlight. I looked after her to watch if she would go far ; but her last moment had come. I think I see her now, standing in the soft shining light, with her pretty head well up, her small ears pointed, and lashing her long bushy tail from side to side. Alas ! she had no instinct of her coming danger, for in a moment, from the rear of the tent, a small band of wolves dashed forward—I heard a cry, a snarl, some short greedy

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snap, and all that was left of my poor Billy was a little tuft of blood-stained fur, or rather hair. She was eaten up in a moment before my eyes. It was all my fault for letting her go out, but she begged so hard!

We shall never get on if I stop by the way to tell you the fate of all my pets, so let us keep steadily to our camp life. Leaving Lucknow, we travelled all night in our palanquins, and, about six o'clock in the morning, I was just beginning to feel dozy, when one of the attendants drew aside the curtains of my palkee and pointed to a large clump of trees, saying something I could not understand; however, I sat eagerly up and saw my movable home looking quiet and peaceful in the early morning. We never see such splendid tents in England; they were all double poled, and arranged so as to form a long and wide street, with the Commander-in-Chief's tent across the top. The standard was flying in front, with the sentries pacing up and down before it. At the back of the camp were rows of very small tents

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for the horsekeepers, the cooks, and other outdoor servants : the horses, some four or five in number, were picketed in the rear of their owners' large tents ; behind these again were a swarm of smaller ones for the soldiers, and still further off, among the trees, I could see on one side the camels' camp, and on the other that of the elephants. All looked orderly and quiet in the early morning, and very different to what I soon discovered was its usual aspect. The camp had halted at this Ghât for a few days, to collect all the stragglers and arrange the order of march.

We soon passed the first row of sentries, then the next, and trotted and jolted up to the entrance of one of the largest tents at the upper end of the street. Amid much chattering and jabbering, and entreaties to each other to be 'very careful of the lady-sahib,' my bearers put my palkee down in front of my new home, and I sat up in it, feeling very sleepy, and dusty, and tired, to have my first look at a real tent to live in. I had made up my

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mind that it would be something like the gipsy encampments one sees on a common in England, and that the life would be a rough and uncomfortable one, but there was nothing of the sort. Our old Khansamah appeared at the entrance as beautifully clean in his snowy robes and turban as if he had just come out of a bandbox, and with many salaams ushered us into a sort of verandah which ran all round the tent, and then into the centre compartment. It looked just like a very spacious and lofty drawing-room. On the sand was spread first the thick striped drugget which matched the linings of the tent, pale buff and blue, and over this our own pretty cotton carpets and rugs. There were tables with gay covers, books, writing materials and vases of flowers, plenty of straw arm-chairs, and a long folding chair which made a very good sofa. What I thought the prettiest of all was a sort of trophy of green boughs arranged round the poles, and another of whips, guns, spurs, and swords. It all looked quite homelike and pretty. On a side table

the cloth was laid for the early breakfast, and in a few moments we had some delicious coffee and rusks. At each side of this centre compartment was another room, that on the left hand being fitted up as a very nice bedroom ; a portion of the verandah outside it was curtained off for a bath-room, and contained a large india-rubber bath full of fresh water. The division on the right was arranged as a dressing-room (also with a bath-room), and in it was a writing-table on which the important despatch-box was soon placed.

I now understood how necessary was the second set of everything. All was packed and ready to start as soon as the order of march was issued, so we lived in one tent whilst the other was on its road to the next camping-ground. We very soon set out on the march ; I will describe the routine of a single day to you, and then you will know exactly how we managed for four months. Every Sunday we halted and had morning service in the Highlanders' portion of the camp, and, in the afternoon, full service in

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the Commander-in-Chief's tent. When we arrived at a large station we rested for three or four days whilst His Excellency inspected the garrison. There were a great many balls and parties given in our honour, but the account of these festivities would not interest you much, so I must go back to the daily camp life.

At half-past four o'clock every morning the bugle sounded. We all got up immediately and dressed as quickly as possible, I in my riding-habit; at five the second bugle blew, and instantly, as if by magic, the walls of the tent fell flat disclosing us drinking our coffee. As soon as possible afterwards we started; it was pitch dark and very cold, so we rode for the first few miles on the back of our baggage-elephant. This used to amuse me very much, though I never quite liked the getting up and down. The elephant I rode was larger than those you see in the Zoological Gardens, but quite as tame. His driver, or 'mahout,' sat on the poor beast's head, and hit him hard with a small battle-axe, or prodded him



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with the sharp iron point of a spearhead, when he wanted him to go faster. The elephant did not seem to mind this severe correction in the least, so I hope it did not hurt him. He always knelt down for me to mount, and then a ladder was placed against his side, and I scrambled up on the pad which was my only saddle. Now it is very difficult to go quickly up a shaky ladder in a long habit, and I was always glad when I found myself safely perched on his back. From this height, as soon as the day began to dawn, I could see the endless line of the procession: not only were there all the soldiers horse and foot, but innumerable camp-followers, with droves of sheep, of cows, of poultry: carts of all sorts and sizes, with ammunition, knapsacks, provisions, the wives and children of the hundreds of servants, the washer-men, the water-carriers, and many more than I can remember, all wending their way in silence amid clouds of dust. Every now and then a jingling of bells would herald the swift passing of an orderly mounted on a camel, who was

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hurrying on with orders, his steed gay with trappings of green and crimson to mark that it belonged to the ‘Camel Corps.’ I used to see regularly every morning on the line of march a very seedy-looking pony about as big as a Newfoundland dog, with a cock perched on its back. Whenever the poor little pony stopped the cock flapped his wings and set up a loud crow; I never could discover that the pony had any other duty to perform except to carry that cock.

As soon as the day dawned, which was not much before six, we began to look out for our horses; they had been sent on, and were awaiting us by the side of a wall or under a tree. We soon mounted and set off as hard as we could gallop so as to get out of the dust. Ten miles of fast cantering brought us to the new camp, and we rode up to the entrance of a tent precisely like the one we had left an hour or two before. There was breakfast ready, and everything looking as if we had lived in the tent for years. The first thing to do was to get rid of the dust, then

we had a good breakfast ; after that I saw the Khan-samah, paid his bill for yesterday, and gave orders for to-morrow. At first I was obliged to have an interpreter whilst arranging my household affairs, but very soon I could get on by myself. Of course I made absurd mistakes ; as when I told the poor Khansamah one morning to bring in more *bundles of firewood* for breakfast ! I meant to order eggs, but the words are not in the least alike in Hindoostanee. I never shall forget the poor man's look of astonishment at my insisting on being obeyed, nor did I discover my mistake till the woodcutters filed into the tent, one after another, each carrying a large faggot which he laid at my feet, and the old Khan-samah looked at me, as much as to say, ‘I hope you are satisfied now.’

After my interview with the cook, I settled down to my lessons, and very hard I had to work, I assure you ; for, whatever clever people may say about it, I only know I found Hindoostanee exceedingly difficult to learn ; it is tolerably easy to pick up a

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few sentences, just enough to give orders to the servants, but it is quite another thing learning a language where some of the letters of the alphabet are only two little dots, or a dot and a stroke, or a little dash ; and I *never* could feel at home beginning my copy at what we consider the end of a line, on the right hand, and writing backwards. Then, after studying for some time very attentively, and hoping I had got on very well, I made the humiliating discovery that I could only read my own writing, any one else's being to me as undecipherable as hieroglyphics ! By the time my studies were over it was time for luncheon ; after lunch I had a nap, getting up about four to change my dress for a hunting expedition. All along the line of march we could find game a little off the main road, so every afternoon our 'shikari,' or huntsman, came to the tent-door with his elephant, and some coolies to beat for us. He made it his business to discover the best and nearest place for red-legged partridges, wild ducks, snipe, peacocks, or antelopes ; we seldom had

to go more than four miles before we dismounted from the elephant; we then went into the jungle, and the gentlemen shot until it got too dark to see the game. I acted as dog upon these expeditions, for English pointers are exceedingly rare, and very seldom of any use; the native servant who takes care of each couple is always dreadfully afraid of his charges, and never thinks of keeping them in order; he pampers and pets them, letting them do just as they like, and always speaks of them as 'Kootah Sahib,' or 'Mr. Dog.' So I used to beat the bushes for partridges, and whenever we put up a covey I marked them down, ran off to the bush where they took shelter, and waited there till the sportsmen came up. I carried a gun myself once, and only once. I never had courage to fire it, but once it went off of its own accord and shot a porcupine. Poor little creature! I was so sorry for it; there was nothing to be seen after the explosion but a few quills, which I have kept carefully ever since.

Stalking the antelopes was the best fun: they

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were so clever and so fleet that we could hardly ever get near enough for a rifle shot, but then the triumph was all the greater when we returned to camp with a fine fat buck slung on the elephant. As soon as I dismounted at my tent-door, the mahout ordered the elephant to 'salaam,' so he lifted up his long trunk and slapped his great wide forehead with it three or four times, just as the natives do. I always gave him something for his civility, a piece of cake or a large lump of sugar; but what he liked best was a bottle of beer; it was so curious to see how carefully he took it up in his trunk and poured the contents slowly into his huge mouth. I only gave him a pint bottle, so I suppose he considered that a mere sip! We had just time to dress for dinner, which was always at seven. We often dined out, or had officers to dine with us, for everybody was very sociable and pleasant; but it seemed rather odd to me that all guests were expected to send to the tent where they were going to dine, their own chair, plate, tumbler, wineglass,

knife and fork, and spoon! However, if you think of it, it would have been impossible to carry about things enough for a dozen extra guests. We four ladies were made a great deal of, and used often to dine at the mess tents of the various regiments: but there was no sitting up late; everybody in camp —servants and all—was fast asleep by ten o'clock, and there was not a sound to be heard but the laugh of the hyenas, or the loud baying of the wolves.

There was no packing or unpacking to be seen; everything was done in the new tent before we arrived, and in the old one after we had left it. The country was so flat and level that it was difficult to believe we were getting on, until our arrival at some great town marked our progress. I don't think any one was ill the whole time we were marching, and we had only one accident. A dear little girl called Rose (a very white rose she was, poor child) set her pinafore on fire one evening, just as we were all dressing for a dinner-party at the Commander-in-Chief's. I heard a shriek from the tent opposite to

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mine, and rushed across the wide space to see what was the matter. I was only in time to see Rosy's mamma seize a little pillar of flame—which turned out to be the child—in her arms, thereby setting all the lace trimming on her evening dress in a blaze. My toilette was not so far advanced, and I had on a very large wide flannel dressing-gown, so I threw myself upon the blazing heap, and in a second the tent ropes had been cut, and the canvas came huddling down on us. This put us all out at once, but for fear we might still be smouldering, the fire-engines began to play upon us, until I really thought we should have been drowned; I struggled to free myself, and shouted, as loud as I could, entreaties to the kelasses to leave off pumping, and to lift up the flaps of the tent; but, alas! all my Hindooostanee went out of my head, and I could only remember one word, which means ‘take care;’ so the more I shrieked this out, the more they replied, ‘Very good, lady-sahib, we are taking care,’ and pumped with greater vigour than ever. Poor little Rose and

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her mamma had both fainted, one from pain and the other from fright. At last some gentlemen came to our rescue and got the canvas up and extricated us ; how dripping wet we all were ! Rosy's arms and chest were much burned, and the poor little girl suffered terribly ; but she was very good and patient, and in a few weeks got quite well. I don't think she will ever hold her pinafore over a candle again.

The first large station we came to was Bareilly ; this was after three weeks' marching ; but our doings there would not interest you much. We had reviews in the daytime, or rather in the early morning and late in the evening, and balls at night. The only thing I find noticed in my diary of those days is an account of some feats of horsemanship, which we were invited to witness one afternoon. The performers were the soldiers, a regiment of Irregular Cavalry, who marched with us. They were mounted on wild-looking horses ; and though the trappings were gay, the effect of the whole was somewhat shabby. But the pace they went at was

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wonderful. We stood in a tent verandah, and in front of the open space before it were some empty soda-water bottles planted in the sand with just their necks sticking out ; at a signal some twenty or thirty horsemen dashed out of the ranks—the regiment was drawn up opposite to us, but a long way off—and with wild cries swooped down like eagles on these bottles, sticking the points of their long slender lances into the mouth of the bottle and lifting it out of the ground : fancy doing this as you pass at full gallop ! They did the same thing to a tent peg ; then there were some more bottles planted, and the men fired their carbines at them as they passed rapidly, and I find it recorded that only two missed out of twenty-eight riders. After that, the whole line charged past us like a whirlwind, the men flung themselves out of their saddles as they rushed by, holding still on to their bridle-reins however, ran a few steps by the side of their horses, and then lightly vaulted in the saddle again. The next feat was performed by a solitary horseman, who,

with the reins lying loosely before him, jumped up on his saddle as he swept past us, fired off his carbine at a mark (they hardly ever missed), then throwing his arms round his horse's neck, clung on for a few yards, at its side, so as to shelter himself from a supposed enemy; when the imaginary danger was over, he swung back into his saddle and quickly reloaded his piece: all this at full gallop. The bits they use are tremendously powerful, so that they can check their horses instantly, if necessary. They would have gone on much longer if it had not been for the dust, but that was so dense after all this riding about, that when His Excellency sent for the commanding officer to thank him and pay him compliments on the skill and cleverness of his men, we could hardly see either of them for the clouds of it, and the pretty speeches were made and answered amid paroxysms of choking and coughing.

After leaving Bareilly we had a very monotonous time, only once enlivened, when we halted for a day at a place called Gunnespore, by a visit from

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the Nawab of Rampore, through whose territory we were passing. He had behaved very well to the English at the time of the Mutiny, three or four years before, so we made it a point to be very civil and nice to him, for these native princes think a great deal of ceremonious attention. The main street, formed by the principal tents, was lined with soldiers as a guard of honour, and His Highness was received at the door of the Commander-in-Chief's tent by His Excellency in person, with a brilliant staff behind and around him, bands playing, colours flying, and everything as smart and gay as possible. As we ladies had a great wish to see the show, some curtains (or 'chicks' as they are called) of scented grass had been hung up, so as to screen off a corner of the great tent, for the Nawab would have been terribly shocked to see unveiled ladies, or indeed ladies at all, assisting at a state ceremonial. Our presence would have spoiled it, so we were carefully hidden away and entreated to keep very quiet! However, in spite of these difficulties, we saw very

well, and had an excellent view of the Nawab's elephant, who was not only a huge creature with a splendid howdah of silver and ivory on his back, but had on his best clothes, consisting of a magnificent saddle-cloth to go under the howdah, about the size of a small carpet, and several enormous tassels hanging about his head, the largest of which was of silver, and hung down his nose in a most imposing manner. There were several other elephants, also very smartly caparisoned, and as soon as they reached the proper place, they all knelt; the Nawab and his attendants scrambled, in as dignified a way as they could, down their ornamented ladders; cordial and affectionate greetings were exchanged through the medium of the interpreters, and the gay group entered the tent. I was so disappointed in the Nawab! He was very fat and good-natured looking, but in spite of his purple satin robes, embroidered in silver and edged with large emeralds and pearls, he looked like an old cook in a dressing-gown! It must have been his cap which made me think directly of Gunter's men,

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for although it was of white satin, and almost entirely covered with jewels, it was just the same shape as theirs. At this part of the ceremony, ‘necklaces of honour’ were put on, and I am very much afraid we giggled at the ridiculous appearance of our husbands and acquaintances, bedizened with large strings of silver knobs, or even flowers in some cases; the contrast was so great between their stalwart forms, bearded faces, and weather-stained uniforms, their breasts covered with medals, and these trumpery wreaths hung round their necks! However, it was kindly meant, and consequently well received. Trays of sweetmeats were handed round, and they had to eat them; you would not consider this a penance, I daresay, but wait till you are forty years old, and have been in a great many battles: gunpowder spoils your taste for comfits, I fancy. The visit lasted about twenty minutes, and was occupied entirely by mutual compliments. At last the servants reappeared, bearing salvers covered with beautiful embroidered cloths; underneath the

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cloths were vases of filagree silver containing exquisite scent-bottles filled with attar of roses: these were handed round. It was all very nice except the perfume—that was horrible: the attar was in the stage when it smells like turpentine. I know it to my cost, because I insisted afterwards on seeing the box, and stole one drop of the scent; it was so nasty I had to throw away my pocket-handkerchief, and nearly scrubbed the skin off my hands trying to get rid of the smell. After they had all gone through the pantomime of pouring the scent on their hands, the Nawab retired and mounted his grand elephant, and, with many bows and pretty speeches, they all went away to the sound of a salute of artillery. In the evening the Commander-in-Chief, his staff, and the principal officers, went in state to return His Highness's visit, and the next day we resumed our march.

We reached Meerut about January 16, remained there for nearly a week, and then three long marches brought us as far as Delhi, which I thought

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the most beautiful place I had ever seen. There are ruins in every direction, but I have not time or space to tell you about them here, as we must remember that this is only an account of camp life. A terrible famine had raged the whole of the past year, and the sights and sounds we encountered at this town were heartrending. Every officer and soldier belonging to our camp subscribed a day's pay for the starving people, and a large sum was left in the hands of the Relief Committee. As for me, I never went outside the tent without a bag of small coins called 'pice,' which was emptied in about two minutes. Returning one day to the tent with my usual exhausted purse, a poor woman threw herself before me holding up a child of about two years old in her arms. There was no need to tell me they were starving, for their bones were literally sticking out of their skins, and they had scarcely a shred of clothing over them. I told her as well as I could that I had no more money, but if she would wait a little she should have food,

so I hurried into the tent and snatched off the luncheon table a loaf of bread with one hand and a large cake with the other, intending to return for some milk ; I saw the poor little starving baby's eyes glisten ravenously, and he clutched the cake, but before he could touch it, the mother had struck both the bread and the cake out of my hands, and trampled them under her feet, scolding me loudly all the time for attempting to 'break her caste.' She was so deeply affronted, that she would not even accept some pice which I offered her afterwards.

A few days after leaving Delhi we reached Kurnaul, where we had very good snipe-shooting, but did not halt there, as it was important to push on for Umballah. The heat was fiercer day by day, and the Commander-in-Chief was anxious to break up the camp before the hot winds set in. Between Kurnaul and Umballah we came in for a dust-storm ; and as I do not suppose you ever saw, or perhaps ever heard of, such a thing, I must tell you a little about it.

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Just as we had settled down quietly for the day in our tent, we were startled by hearing the ‘tap tap’ of the kelasse’s heavy wooden hammer on the tent-pegs. As they never require to drive the pegs further home, except in case of a sudden storm, we knew at once that they expected something of the kind; but as there was no symptom of rain, we could not imagine why these precautions were necessary. However, all was bustle and activity: the horses were led round to the lee side of their owners’ tents, and, instead of being fastened to a peg in the ground, each syce stood by his horse’s head, holding tight on to the halter, so as to soothe and pat it when it got frightened. All the servants who had nothing to do, huddled themselves together in a corner of the verandah; the saddles were brought under the same shelter, and at last the preparations were completed by the Khansmah bringing in the candlesticks, with the candles alight, and placing them in the centre compartment of the tent. My ayah was hovering about me with a long strip

of white muslin in her hand, and made out from her incoherent speeches that she wanted to tie up my head in it, but before I consented to this, I took one more peep out of doors. From the weather-quarter a dense black cloud was moving swiftly up, and every now and then the wind rose in a sharp, short gust, which whistled and screamed among the cordage and flaps of the tents. All around me I saw hasty preparations for shelter going on, and my last glimpse was of the poor, much-enduring cook abandoning the little mud ovens he had just constructed as a substitute for a kitchen-range, and hurrying, with his assistants and quantities of pots and pans, towards a little bell-tent which the kelasses were pinning firmly down to the ground with great wooden pegs. It is of great importance in a dust-storm to have the tent firmly secured all round, for, if the wind once got underneath the canvas, the whole tent would be whisked off to the sky in a moment! I am very much afraid I should rather have liked to see some one else's

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tent flying away, it would have looked so funny: however, the kelasses had made such good arrangements that no accidents happened.

In the camels' camp I saw all the drivers making their charges kneel down with their backs to the coming storm, whilst the men themselves crouched on the lee-side of the camels, but there was no time for me to notice what the elephants were going to do, for the storm was almost upon us; the outer air already felt suffocating, so I very reluctantly retired to get my turban put on. Scarcely had the servants fastened firmly to the ground the large curtain which formed our tent-door, and which was generally festooned back with green wreaths of mango-leaves, when the tent shook and swayed backwards and forwards, and in a few moments everything was thickly covered with the finest dust, which had filtered through the numerous folds of the canvas. It was impossible to read or work, the candles only gave a little gleam of light through the dense atmosphere,



and all we touched was gritty. For four long hours our imprisonment lasted, and it was not until sunset that the kelasses pronounced it safe to release us. As soon as the tent flaps were lifted up we all burst out laughing at each other—such objects you never saw! No one had an eyebrow or an eyelash to be seen ; the bronzed and red complexions which outdoor life had produced, were all hidden under a thick coating of dust, and we needed only a few streaks of paint to have looked like Clown in the pantomime, for our faces were quite as white as his. We could see the dense cloud moving on to the south-west, but all was beautifully clear behind it ; only a slight haze between us and it showed that the atmosphere was not quite free from dust a little beyond us. I looked at the horses,—they were all as white as if they had been powdered with flour ; so were their syces ; and the ‘bheesties,’ or water-carriers, were very busy filling the large goat-skins which serve them as water-jugs, to give every live thing which had been outside a good drink, and to

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wash the dust out of their eyes and ears. The camels had buried their noses in the sand, and did not appear to have suffered at all.

I went that afternoon to the elephants' camp to see how they had fared, and found them not at all the worse for the storm: the dense grove of trees had been a great protection to them, and their attendants had taken shelter in the little tents which the great creature carries for his servants. Do you know, each elephant has a cook to bake his chupatties, or little cakes, for him, a grass-cutter to go out and find nice fresh long grass, or the green tops of the sugar-cane, a bheestie to supply him with quantities of water, and a tent-pitcher, or kelasse, to look after the shelter of all these attendants; and then he has his mahout, or rider, besides. This last personage is the only one whom the elephant will obey, and I heard curious stories of the office of mahout to the same elephant being handed down from father to son. One old man told me calmly that his grandfather was my ele-

phant's first instructor, but I cannot tell if he was right. When we paid them a visit upon the afternoon of the storm, the huge beasts were taking a bath, or rather giving it to themselves by filling their trunks with water and dashing it over their heads, trumpeting and enjoying themselves immensely; at a little distance the cooks were busy baking the chupatties—a muffin as large as a soup-plate, and nearly as thick—in mud ovens, and the grass-cutters had been down to a 'jheel' or pond near to wash the dust off the large bundles of grass for the elephants' suppers. We talked a little to the mahouts, and one very picturesque old man seemed exceedingly proud of his elephant's superior slyness and cunning, and begged us to stay and see him 'cheat'; so we waited till 'Burra-sahib,' or 'Mr. Large,' had finished his bath, and came slowly up to his mahout for his supper. You must not suppose that the elephants walked about just as they liked: they had a heavy, long iron chain fastened to one of their hind legs, and this was

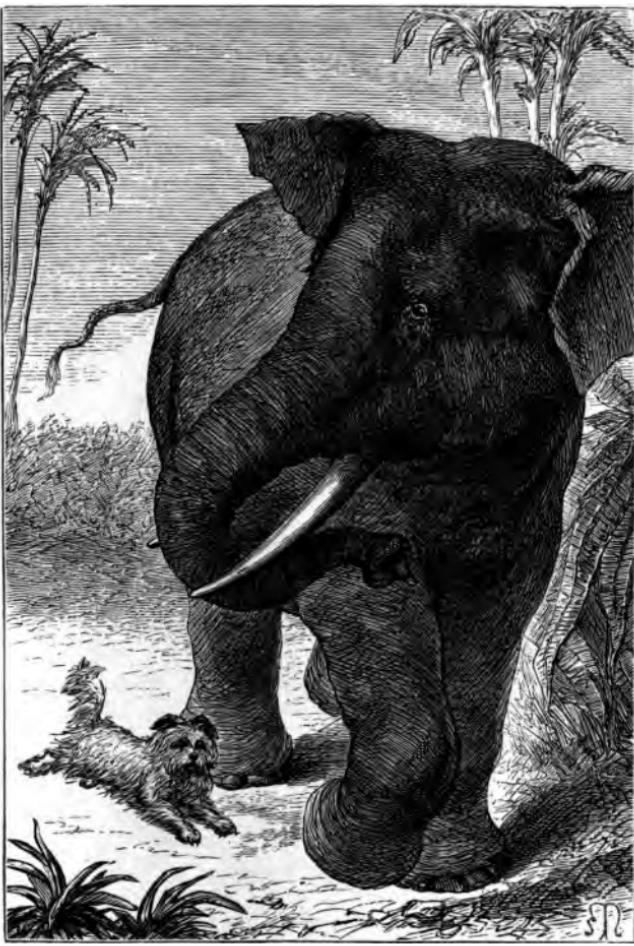
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attached to a small peg loosely driven into the ground. If the elephant had made the smallest effort he could easily have walked off with his peg, but he never tried to get away. The mahout called out to the cook to bring the chupatties, and made us retire behind a tree and watch what Burra-sahib did. As soon as the cook went away the elephant put up his trunk and broke off a large bough of the tree above him, which he laid on his head: this they generally do to serve as a brush to keep off flies, so he knew *that* was nothing remarkable. He then looked slyly around him with his bright little cunning eyes, and as he could not see his mahout he thought the coast was clear, and hastily snatched up a chupattie, which he put under the branch on the top of his head. I noticed how carefully he felt with his flexible trunk if any edge was uncovered, and arranged the leaves so as to hide his spoil completely. Burra-sahib then raised his voice and bellowed for his supper in loud and discordant tones; the mahout ran up as if he had

been a long distance off, stood in front of him, and commenced handing him the chupatties, counting as he did so, one, two, three, and so on. The elephant received each in his trunk and put it gently into his huge mouth, bolting it as if it had been a small pill. Twelve chupatties was the allowance, and he required this sort of food to keep him in good condition. When the mahout came to No. 11 muffin, he looked about for the twelfth in great dismay, pretending that he could not think what had become of it, and calling for the cook to scold him, searching on the ground and wondering, in good Hindooostanee, ‘where that other chupattie could be.’ The elephant joined in the search, turning over an empty box which was near, and trumpeting loudly. The mahout was delighted to see how much this farce amused me, and at last he turned suddenly to the elephant, who was still hunting eagerly for the missing chupattie, and reviled him as a thief and a ‘big owl,’ adding all sorts of epithets, and desiring him to kneel down, which Burra-

sahib did very reluctantly. The mahout then scrambled up on his head, snatched off the branch and flung down the chupattie, belabouring the elephant well with the bough which had served to conceal it. It seems that this trick had been played successfully many times before Burra-sahib was found out, and the poor cook used to get into trouble and be accused of keeping the missing chupattie for his own private consumption.

Our elephant was a great coward ; he was abjectly afraid of a small Skye terrier belonging to one of the party, and this little dog knew quite well how to bully the huge creature. ‘Nettle’ would run along the road behind a hedge or a mud wall, and suddenly jump out at the elephant, barking furiously and making little dashes at his trunk. This terrified him ; he shied across the road, ran first forwards and to each side, and finally turned round and shuffled away as fast as he could, with Nettle snapping at his heels. It required a great deal of cuffing with the battle-axe I have told you about, to



NETTLE AND THE ELEPHANT.

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bring him back to the right road if once he was driven off it by the small dog.

Upon one occasion all our elephants were seized with a sudden panic, and very nearly annihilated the camp. We had halted for two or three days at a large station where an energetic engineer officer had prepared, as a great treat for the Commander-in-Chief, various noisy military shows winding up with the springing of a mine. When the important evening arrived, the whole camp went to see the sight except me, for I must tell you as a secret that I hate reviews; the noise and dust and smell of gunpowder is so disagreeable to me that I never go to one if it is possible to avoid it: upon this occasion I was, as usual, the only person left in camp except a few servants to prepare dinner; every one had departed two or three hours before to assist at the grand affair, and many had chosen to ride to the place of inspection on an elephant, thinking they could then dismount and select a good place to see the show on foot. When the sun had

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set, I came out of my tent and walked up and down the broad street formed by the principal tents; for a wonder, instead of sand, I had nice turf under my feet, and I strolled up and down for a long time, rather enjoying the profound quiet, which was a contrast to the usual bustle and chatter of the camp. I was just beginning to feel hungry and to wonder when the ‘tomasha,’ or festival, would be over, when I heard a loud explosion, and saw clouds of stones and dust fly up into the air some way off. This was the springing of the mine, and I congratulated myself on being so far away in peace and safety; but I soon changed my mind about the safety, for in a few minutes there was a regular stampede of terrified elephants returning to camp. Some had thrown off their riders and were galloping about, trumpeting and bellowing with terror; and even those whose mahouts still clung to them had quite broken away from all control, and did just as they liked. I stood still, watching the huge beasts entangle themselves in the long ropes stretching

out from the tents, and pulling down one after another of our canvas homes. In more than one case the pole of a 'single tent' snapped, causing great ruin beneath, and I saw the cooks with their assistants swarming out like bees from a disturbed hive, whilst the elephants ruthlessly trampled their preparations under foot, and beat down their little mud ovens.

You have no idea of the state of confusion to which the trim, orderly encampment was reduced in about five minutes. As for me, I had observed with great satisfaction that the sentries in front of His Excellency's tent, instead of running away as every one else did, fixed their bayonets, and drew up close together, prepared to stand a charge of this very heavy cavalry, so I prudently sought shelter behind them: however, their bravery was not put to the test, for, although three elephants came very near, they turned tail and galloped off, frightened still more by the scarlet coats and gleaming steel. A great crowd of people had now appeared on the scene,

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for every one at the review had seen the elephants' dismay when the fortification flew up into the air, and those on horseback set off at once to try and turn the terrified animals back. They all considered that the encampment had escaped wonderfully, but I thought a good deal of mischief had been done. Our tent, however, was not touched, which was entirely owing to the presence of mind of the Khan-samah, who snatched up a gay table-cover and rushed out, brandishing its folds in the face of the nearest elephant and fairly frightening him off. He repeated this performance several times with great success, much to my amusement. We made the old man a present afterwards for his pluckiness. He was terribly exhausted with all his dancing, and I felt quite sorry to have to tell him that we should be obliged to ask a great many people to dinner that evening, whose tents had been pulled down by the elephants; however, the old man made his usual graceful reverence, and merely observed, 'Good, very good, protector of the poor.'

About a week before we reached Umballah we had a day, or perhaps I should say a morning, of antelope-hunting with cheetahs. As soon as I came back to England, I went to the Zoological Gardens in the Regent's Park to see the cheetahs there, and found they were very much smaller than those belonging to the Maharajah of this territory, who lent them to our Commander-in-Chief. It had been arranged at dinner the evening before, that I was to accompany the hunting party, so our fleetest and steadiest horses were sent on over night to a little village fifteen miles off, and quite out of the line of march. The next day the camp moved to the new 'ground' as usual, but, instead of marching with it, we joined the hunting-party at daylight, and started as soon as the horses could see their way, for the village of mud huts where the cheetahs awaited us. A gallop of an hour and a half brought us to it, and we found fresh horses and a delicious cup of coffee ready. But the great attraction in my eyes was the cart containing the cheetahs, which I

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cautiously approached whilst the saddle was being transferred to my grey Arab. I saw two very fierce handsome animals, quite as large as panthers, each with a leathern hood over its eyes, and a strong muzzle round its jaws, from both sides of which was an iron chain secured to the cart. No one ventured to go very near them, as their keepers informed us, with much complacency, they were 'hugely hungry,' having been purposely kept without food for two days. Two white bullocks were yoked to each cart, the driver, as usual, sitting *on* the yoke, with his 'face towards the cart, and occasionally hastening the poor beasts onwards by a twist of their tails. A pretty little kid was held in the dusky arms of another attendant, who was seated behind the cheetah and its keeper; a rough wooden bowl and a large knife were now put upon each cart, and, as all the preparations had been completed, we mounted our fresh horses. Before starting, the 'shikari,' or huntsman in charge of the expedition, looked us all carefully over to see that we had no fluttering

garments about us. The gentlemen buttoned up their loose light coats, and my veil was condemned at once by the shikari's grave, reproachful eyes, so it was soon stowed away in the pocket of the saddle, and we set off. The two carts with the cheetahs went first, and we divided ourselves into two parties of three each, and kept well hidden by the cart, which was thus between us and a large herd of antelopes feeding in the middle of a plain belted by trees. It was such a beautiful scene! The dew glistening on every blade of grass, the immense extent of open country around us, with here and there a patch of cultivation to mark where a village stood, the background of giant mountains whose peaks were only to be discerned in this early morning light before the haze and heat of the day covered them up with soft filmy vapour, and the long level beams of the rising sun lying like shafts of the purest gold over all the fair earth. Do you know I felt very much ashamed of myself! It seemed so horrible to have come out on such a bright, glorious

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morning, to hunt to the death poor, beautiful, unoffending animals. It was too late, however, for me to turn back, but I was very unhappy all the time ; and if it had not been for the shikari's sharp eyes, my waving habit-skirt, as I hung back a little behind the cart, would have warned the antelopes of their danger ; but he evidently had no notion of allowing my qualms of conscience to interfere with the sport, so he kept strict watch over me, and politely but firmly pointed out my proper position. All this time we were circling round and round the herd of antelopes, drawing nearer and nearer with each circle, until we had approached quite close to a fine buck feeding a little apart from the others. A few whispered words from the shikari to the keeper of the cheetah, who was in the foremost cart, and the man unfastened very gently the iron chains which secured the fierce brute to the cart, and cheetah as well as keeper slipped noiselessly down on the ground under cover of a little bush. Still the carts crept slowly on with the drivers crooning a low monotonous song ; I could

see everything by turning my head, and looking back as we moved away from the bush. In half a moment the heavy collar was off the cheetah's neck, and the hood lay on the grass behind him; with a soft whisper in his ear, just as if he had been a tame cat instead of a ravenous wild beast, the keeper took the huge head between his hands, turned it in the direction of the buck (who was keeping an eye on the carts), and let the cheetah go, at the same moment gliding quite under shelter of the bush. Exactly as a cat would approach an unsuspecting mouse, did the cheetah steal through the long grass towards his prey: crouching flat to the ground, he crept along with his terrible eyes fixed on it till he was within about fifty yards off; then up he rose sudden and swift, with every hair of his magnificent coat bristling on end, with his powerful tail lashing the ground, and his lips drawn back from the strong cruel teeth. Two enormous bounds carried him close to the buck, who stood for an instant as if paralysed, and then turned to fly; but it was too late; a third

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spring with a howl of fury brought the cheetah on his back, with his teeth in the graceful neck which a moment before had held the antlered head up so proudly. I saw the buck drop on his knees, and the keeper rush up to secure the cheetah again before he should begin to tear the venison, and then I could see no more ; the gentlemen galloped off to the spot, and I remained under shelter of the cart with my face buried in my hands, sobbing as if my heart would break. I was so sorry for the poor buck !

We were too far from the camp for me to return alone, so I was obliged, very reluctantly, to go after another herd of antelopes who were reported to be feeding tranquilly a few miles nearer our destination. We cantered towards the open plain with the carts lumbering behind us, and both the cheetahs once more securely fastened on them. As soon as the scout who had been sent running on before, came back to tell the shikari the position of the herd, we were ranged in our old order, and went through precisely the same manœuvres, except that in this case,

to my great joy, the antelope turned his head the least bit sooner, saw the cheetah high up in the air taking his second bound towards him, and was off like a flash of lightning to join the others, who were scampering away for their lives. I had hardly time to express my joy at the buck's escape before one of my companions said very coolly, 'Now we must look out for ourselves,' and gathering up his reins, drew a large revolver from his holster, and came between my horse and the cheetah, who now turned round and stood looking fixedly at the little group, as if he were debating on which horse he should spring. He looked so handsome and so wicked,—his fur bristled up, his tail slowly giving angry little thumps on the ground at each side, his head thrown well back, and his fierce ravenous eyes gazing at us, whilst a low sound, between a snarl and a growl, came from his mouth. I felt like the poor buck, quite paralysed with fright, and gazed at the cheetah without moving, till the spell of his cruel hungry eyes was broken by the lad who had held the kid in

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his arms running fearlessly up to him with the large wooden bowl in his hands. I thought the cheetah would have sprung on him, as his form seemed to dilate, and his eyes gleamed still brighter at sight and smell of prey so near him ; but the boy quickly and fearlessly flung the contents of the bowl—the poor kid's life-blood—straight in his face—dropped it, and fled. The cheetah was half blinded by the sudden shock, and stood irresolute for a moment licking the warm blood which was streaming over his jaws. That bewildered instant was quite enough for his keeper, who glided under cover of a shrub near him, ran out, and slipped the hood over his eyes and the collar round his throat, in the twinkling of an eyelid. The cheetah's whole demeanour changed as if by magic ; he slunk along by the keeper's side looking quite ashamed of himself, whilst the man heaped reproaches on him for having missed his prey. It seemed bad enough to lose his breakfast, without being also well scolded for it.

As soon as the cheetah was chained on the cart

again, a discussion arose as to where we should go next ; but by this time the sun had become very hot, and I was much too hungry and tired to go farther away from my canvas home ; and as I saw the sharp points of the tents, like white vandykes, on the blue horizon, I turned Claude's head that way, and set off home straight across country, with my 'syce' or groom running by my side. He either did not or would not understand me when I told him, in my best Hindooostanee, to remain behind and let me gallop on alone, for he merely said, 'Very good, Mr. Lady,' and kept on running close to my horse. Perhaps he did not like to let Claude out of his sight, and thought it would be better for all parties if I went slowly, which at last I was obliged to do, reaching the camp in time for a late but much 'better-than-never' breakfast.

We had no more hunting expeditions after this, for we were getting near the foot of the Himalaya mountains ; the towns and villages were closer together, and the cultivation more extended. One

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afternoon we went to shoot peacocks in a dense patch of tall sugar-canies ; but although the birds really were perfectly wild and very strong on the wing, I felt more ashamed of myself than ever. I could not dismiss from my mind the memory of many tame peacocks who had fed out of my hand in England, and it seemed very ruthless to return home with five splendid young birds dangling at our elephant's huge side. They were excellent eating, and I remembered so well that when I was a child, and read historical accounts of great feasts in olden time, I had been filled with indignation at the idea of our ancestors including peacocks in their bill of fare. I little thought I should ever eat them myself, and so will some of you perhaps, one of these fine days.

The beginning of March saw the camp in great confusion and bustle, packing up and arranging for its final dispersion till the next cold season. Some of its inhabitants returned to Calcutta, poor creatures! some went to the various large stations we had marched through ; and the fortunate remainder went

up to the mountains whose grand outlines had been before us in our daily march for some time past, each day's new camp bringing us nearer to them. The weather was becoming very disagreeable on the plains, hot dusty days followed by nights of oppressive stillness. Each morning, as I came out of my tent at the earliest dawn of day to mount Claude or Rajah, I used to look at those glorious mountains rising up, chain beyond chain, till the snowy summits were lost in the light clouds above them ; and the listless, languid feeling, which was already creeping over me at the first breath of the hot wind on the plains, gave place to hope and courage. I often had that verse in the Psalms brought vividly to my mind, ‘I will lift up mine eyes to the hills, from whence cometh my help.’ The great object of everybody’s life here seemed to be to get away to the hills in the hot weather ; and their anxiety was not to be wondered at, for it often makes the difference of their life or death whether they can have this change or not.

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I lived among these beautiful mountains for five months after our camp broke up at Kalka, at the very foot of the mountain range ; but as these are only stories of our life whilst we were actually housed in tents, I must not tell you about my delightful walks, and rides up and down the steep hill-sides. But during the last week of my camp life I had a little adventure, with the account of which I shall end my tales for the present.

First of all it is necessary to explain that, on the night of my story, there were very few gentlemen in camp. The Commander-in-Chief wished to visit a military station close by, but did not think it necessary to move the whole encampment thither, especially as there were difficulties about water ; so the tents were pitched in a favourable spot, and in the afternoon His Excellency, with most of the officers at the head of departments, rode over to dine and sleep at the neighbouring fort, intending to make their inspection early the following morning, and join the camp during its march to the next 'ground'—all of

which plan was successfully carried out ; but it is of what befell me during the night that I must tell you.

You will remember there were only four ladies in camp, and, as it happened, each of us was bereft of her husband by this arrangement about the fort. We agreed to dine together, and a very pleasant evening we had, separating as early as usual to allow of a good sleep before five o'clock the next morning. It must have been about nine that I was sitting before my toilet glass reading, whilst my ayah was slowly and sleepily brushing my hair. I had particularly enquired about the fastening of the tent, going myself round the outer verandah to see that no one was inside its shelter ; the ayah and I were carefully shut up within the canvas walls, as if we had been wild birds anxious to fly away. Nevertheless, I had a disagreeable feeling that some one was watching me ; I suddenly looked up, and there, sure enough, reflected in the glass, saw a pair of bright eyes fixed on mine. The rest of the face I

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could not see, for the curtain of scented grass which formed the door between my bedroom and the outer part of the verandah, was lined with crimson cotton to about the height of an ordinary person; so only by standing on tiptoe could a tall man even peep over this lining. I exclaimed in Hindoostanee, ‘Ayah! there’s a man in the tent.’ The ayah’s first care was to veil her face most carefully, as she was of very high caste, and then she slowly glided away, with many exclamations of ‘A bad fellow, a thief,’ to call the watchman. I ventured into the verandah, but no trace of an opening could I see. When the watchman appeared, he had to call the kelasses, and it took them at least five minutes to pull up the pegs which fastened the tent-door curtain securely down. The most careful search on all sides failed to find the supposed thief, or even any crevice by which he could have got in, so I had to be satisfied with the watchman’s assurance that, when *he* was the guardian, no harm *could* come near me. I confess that I kept the ayah up a long time,

but at last she looked so sleepy that I was obliged to dismiss her, and sat on the edge of my bed, wondering whether it was fancy that had shown me those bright gleaming eyes in the looking-glass. At last I collected the two or three little trinkets which lay on the table, and as I was placing them under my pillow, looked again towards the grass curtain: there were the eager, wild-looking eyes, and a strip of dusky brown could also be plainly seen. I sprang up, and with a loud call to the ayah (which, however, failed to awaken her) pushed aside the curtain; all was darkness and silence. I took the little lamp in my hand, and carefully searched the whole tent: there certainly was no one in it. I was sleepy and tired, and could not keep awake any longer, so I got into bed, leaving the lamp burning on the dressing-table close to my head.

It must have been about one o'clock in the morning when I was awakened by the loud beating of some one's heart quite close to my ears. Even

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before I was thoroughly awake I remembered the watching eyes of the night before, and did not make a sound, only opening my eyes a little. I saw on the opposite wall the shadow of a man at the head of my bed, bending over me, and with one arm under my pillow gently drawing away the lockets and watch I had placed beneath it for safety. Although I am really a dreadful coward, I did not feel in the least frightened upon this occasion. My first thought was how I should triumph over the old watchman who scouted the idea of danger, and my next was the wild idea that I could take the thief captive myself. I made up my mind what I should do, and then suddenly sat up in bed, putting out my right arm and clutching firm hold of the dressing-table so as to imprison the man behind it, whilst with my left hand I caught his arm as tightly as I could, and shouted in Hindostanee, in French, as well as in English, for help. My ayah awoke directly, but did not get up; she lay still and screamed at the pitch of her voice; but, alas! my

strength was not sufficient to keep my captive for a moment. He did not seem in the least disconcerted at the outcry, nor was he rough; he very gently but firmly moved my arm, which I fondly hoped was going to prove a barrier, shook himself free from the other detaining hand, paused to blow out the night-light, and was gone ages before the valiant watchman had come to my assistance. Our cries had awakened a young aide-de-camp sleeping near, who immediately volunteered his services. He returned to his own tent for his revolver, and whilst he and the watchman were searching outside for the robber, I heard the report of a pistol, which awakened the whole camp. This was followed by loud yells and howls of pain, and my new ally ran past me with a very pale and scared face, saying, ‘Oh, I’m afraid I’ve shot your watchman—I’m going for the doctor;’ and so he had, but fortunately only in the leg. As the poor man was creeping softly round the tent, he came plump upon Captain N——, who was also prowling about. My brave watchman, supposing it

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was the robber, instantly took to his heels, and my hasty aide-de-camp promptly discharged his revolver at the retreating figure, and with much too good an aim. The great riddle, however, still remained unanswered, ‘How did the robber get in or out of the tent?’ but it was soon solved in an absurd way. My tent was soon half full of people who came to know what was the matter, and whilst I was explaining the position in which I saw the man, one of my auditors suddenly fell *through* the tent, disappearing as if by magic. He had leaned against the canvas wall, and it had opened from top to bottom. There was the secret door! A sharp knife had made a clean cut from roof to carpet, and as the thief slipped through, the canvas closed behind him, leaving no trace of his passage. The kelasses were the only sufferers by this adventure, for they were not given the customary ‘backsheesh’ when the camp broke up a few days later, as there was a strong suspicion that they knew more of the intended robbery than they chose to acknowledge. They came to implore my inter-

cession, bearing trays of sweetmeats and wreaths of flowers to propitiate me ; but I could not follow their line of defence at all, and my endeavours to get the edict, which had deprived them of their present, revoked, proved fruitless.

*ABOUT DOGS.*

THE worst of a pet dog is that one gets so fond of it. When old age, or accident, or disease deprives you of your faithful friend, your unfailing sympathiser, you ‘go heavily as one that mourneth;’ and cold hard people, who have never known of what true and noble affection dogs are capable, wonder that you can be so silly as to fret after a dog. But if any children who read these pages have ever had a dog of their very own, they will understand exactly what I mean. Dogs do not forget us, why should we be ashamed of preserving a tender recollection of them? If it were possible for the gates of the grave to unclose, and its silent inmates to come back

to this busy world of ours, who would stop to greet them, who would welcome their return more ecstatically than the dog they had fed and befriended ? Whenever I hear a person say, ‘I don’t like dogs,’ I distrust that person, and I would not choose him for my own friend. Whenever I see anyone, big or little, child or grown-up man, deliberately cruel to a dog, I detest them. Of course there is a great difference between pampering a dog until you ruin both its health and temper, making it a plague to everyone, and being careful and considerate of your dog-friend, seeing that it has enough food and water, warmth, and, above all, exercise. People say a dog loves best the person who feeds it. I have not found this to be the case, unless with a greedy little beast : the finest and best dogs are most attached to those who take them out for a walk or a run ; and I always think, that what shows the real nobility of a dog’s nature is, that if they do you a service they love you better than ever afterwards.

It is not, however, about dogs in general that I

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am going to write, but of my own particular friends. They have not always been my private property, for I have a large circle of acquaintances among dogs ; and no compliment which anyone in the world could pay me would flatter me half so much as a poor half-starved homeless cur following me in the street. One of my dearest and most faithful friends came to me in that way : he was benighted on a large desolate common, near a cottage I had just visited ; and ‘ Luck ’ (for so he was christened on the spot) attached himself to my side, insisted on accompanying me home, and never left me from that time till his death, five years later. He was a large, handsome, black water-s spaniel, and had evidently strayed for a long distance ; he was footsore and travel-stained ; his coat was torn and ragged, and his bones were sticking through his skin. For the first night he slept in the stable, and had for supper only stale odds and ends of bread soaked in boiling skim-milk, for I was afraid to give him too much to eat at first. The next morning he had a bath with plenty of

soap and warm water, and I cut off all the tangled hair of his coat. He spent the remainder of that day on an old rug by the kitchen fire, and it was nearly a week before he could run about gaily, for he was evidently an old dog when this terrible misadventure befell him. Talk of the gratitude of human beings, it was nothing to Luck's gratitude, which lasted as long as his life; and he was a wise dog, for he profited by the experience of those dreadful wintry days, and took very good care never to stray or run away again. For the first three months after he gave himself to me, I sought diligently for his rightful owner, but never found anyone to claim him.

My little sister Jessie, whose acquaintance you have already made in the stories about Jamaica, was still more devoted to dogs than I am; and one of my most distinct childish memories is of a dreadful fright she gave us all. I must tell you about it. We were living in the country, and I well remember the long bright summer's day on which I went

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through such agonies of suspense and fear. About an hour after breakfast, when my lessons were over, our dear, nice little governess prepared to take us out for a walk. Jessie had been sent to play in the garden a few moments before, whilst I lingered over a refractory sum which would not prove itself. At last it came right and I was released ; but, when Miss Lewis called Jessie to join us, no Jessie was to be found. One of the servants had seen her leave the house, and that was the only news of the little girl whom we all loved and petted so much. The garden, grounds, and even the fields were thoroughly searched before Miss Lewis could make up her mind to alarm Mamma, who was in very delicate health. Oh! how well I remember the actual sickness which came over me when Mamma asked, with a trembling voice, ‘ Have you examined the well.’ Now this well was a most peculiar one. In the centre was the ordinary brick round hole with a powerful windlass over it, but on each side extended a large deep cistern with only a very narrow brick coping. We

knew these cisterns were full of water, for there had been heavy rain lately, and it was quite possible for a small child to drown itself in either of them. Mamma wished me to remain with her; but I could not endure to be quiet, so I set off with the others to this dangerous place. It was the work of half-an-hour at least to convince ourselves that Jessie was neither in the well nor the cisterns, and I was nearly frantic with misery whilst the search was going on.

A messenger on horseback was despatched for my father, who was absent, and on his arrival the servants were divided into regular parties to examine every possible hiding-place. An old man who attended to the cows had attracted my attention early in the day by wiping his eyes constantly with his sleeve whilst he was looking about, and saying to himself, ‘poaty little dear.’ To this sympathising individual I immediately attached myself, and holding tight on to his horny hand wandered for miles hither and thither all day. I had an instinctive feeling that old Jim would not scold Jessie if we

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discovered her, whereas any of the others would be sure to lecture her well all the way to the house.

At last sunset came and Jim proceeded to collect the cows and drive them to a ruinous old shed to milk them. I still followed him closely, and as the first cow leisurely entered her stall I heard a sweet little voice say, ‘Oh, don’t walk on me, please !’ There was Jessie, buried in hay, hungry and tired, but with an air of patient endurance nursing tenderly in her arms half-a-dozen pointer puppies ! She had discovered that old Juno had increased her already numerous progeny during the night, and she had spent the whole day in what she called ‘helping her to take care of all ’dem babies.’ We asked her if she had heard our calls, and she said, ‘Yes, but de babies were asleep, and I couldn’t wake ’em by saying where I was.’ Poor little Jessie, she could not understand what suffering she had caused us, and thought Nurse very hard-hearted for refusing to permit her to resume her duties the next day. The matter was referred to the authorities, but when

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Nurse hinted, as delicately as so elegant a personage could, at the number of fleas which pervaded the little girl's clothes, it was decided at once in the negative, much to old Juno's relief probably.

We had dogs of all sorts and sizes during our childhood, and, as well as I can remember, the ugliest were always the best beloved. If any particularly hideous mongrel was condemned to death, Jessie and I invariably interceded for it, and when we gained our point, watched over and tended it with the greatest care, stoutly maintaining its beauty and talent against all detractors. At last, one happy day, when we were both nearly grown up, we were each given a real Carthagena dog. What little beauties they were, something like a Maltese poodle, only smaller. They were as white as little puff-balls, with lovely silky hair; they never grew any bigger than they were when we got them, and their health was excellent. Every morning we washed them in a basin, dried them in the sun, combed their coats till they shone like floss silk, and trimmed the hair off

their delicate little feet. The last touch to their toilettes was to put on a little collar of either blue or scarlet ribbon or velvet. Whenever we had any pocket money, it all went in new collars for 'Caprice' and 'Chico.' Caprice was so called because he had a natural rosette of black fluff on his forehead amid his snowy locks, whilst Chico (or little darling) was about the size of a sixpenny toy-lamb. They both slept all day in my work-basket on the table out of harm's way. They were fed entirely on biscuit and milk, and Caprice lived to a good old age, but Chico's fate was appalling, and cost both Jessie and me many bitter tears.

I must tell you here that Jessie had another pet dog, a fierce Cuban bloodhound : it was kept chained up all day and only loosed at night as a safeguard to the house and grounds. 'Turk' was a splendid animal, but ferocious to everyone except Jessie. I never could get over my uneasiness when I saw him leaping on her, licking her cheek, or mumbling her little hand affectionately. Jessie always fed him herself, and declared his bad temper

was much exaggerated. One summer evening we had been out to a little party given at a house near ours, and had walked home; it was a lovely, soft, moonlight night, and, the moment the garden gate was opened, Turk bounded up to us with the sternest intentions of expelling or killing us all on the spot. However, Jessie induced him to forego these resolutions for the present, and he accompanied us to the hall door, which was quickly opened by our maid. Close upon her footsteps trotted tiny Chico, uttering sleepy little barks. Turk had never seen his small rival, and the instant he perceived that Chico was really a living, moving dog (for at first he must have thought that he was a toy), he bounded upon the poor little beastie. Before Jessie could stop him, we heard a yelp and a snap; Turk had bitten Chico in two! It was a dreadful moment, for Jessie's despair is not to be described, and Turk saw no reason why he should not finish his supper, and looked up in Jessie's horrified face with a self-satisfied air, as much as to say, 'Thus perish all

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intruders.' This tragedy had one good result in Turk's banishment, for Jessie could not bear to see the murderer of Chico ; so the bloodhound was sent away to a distant friend, where he became the terror of all the evildoers in the neighbourhood.

I think Punch, a great tawny mastiff, was Turk's successor. He distinguished himself by keeping a bishop at bay. You see he was no respecter of persons, and, as the bishop happened to have on papa's shoes whilst his own boots were being dried, Punch sternly refused to allow his lordship to leave the room. We waited and waited for more than an hour ; luncheon was getting cold ; still the poor bishop remained in my father's dressing-room, whither he had been conducted ; and at last he was discovered, very tired and hungry, but unable to stir. Punch was lying down in front of the chair (fortunately he permitted the poor man to sit down) with his head resting on his own forepaws, and keeping an unwearying watch on the shoes ; they were not to be taken out of the room on any terms, and

even Jessie had great difficulty in making him understand that it was all right.

Punch was very fond of the water, and would go into a river after a stick as well as if he had been a retriever. Upon one occasion I was sitting in the verandah teaching my youngest sister, a tiny little trot of about six years old, to work. It was a distasteful employment, and the seam appeared quite endless to both of us. You must not be shocked if I tell you, it was a little night-dress of her own that Laura was employed upon. It had been finished very successfully, as we thought; but this unfortunate seam was badly done, and had to be unpicked and neatly sewn again. At last the finishing stitches were put in, and with a sigh of relief Laura jumped up. At this unlucky moment Punch appeared, evidently in the mood for a game of play, and the idea occurred to Laura to dress him up in her garment. Of course I ought to have prevented it, but I satisfied my conscience by a very feeble remonstrance, and aided and abetted this piece of mischief. Punch certainly

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looked exquisitely ridiculous with his forepaws through the sleeves, and, when we buttoned the little collar securely round his throat, both Laura and I were too much amused at his appearance to think of the consequences to her newly-finished work. Suddenly Punch—who up to that time had been as grave as a judge—gave a mighty bound, knocking Laura over and nearly upsetting me, and, like a flash of lightning, he tore down the garden walk, leapt a low hedge, and we heard a great splash. We rushed after him. There was Punch, still in his white robe, swimming about in the brook. How absurd the effect was no words of mine can tell you. In a few moments he was out again on the other side, rolling on the bank, tearing about the field trying to get rid of the wet clinging calico. It was no use; the stuff was new, and would not tear easily. Into the brook again he plunged, and at last scampered away to the stable, where he succeeded in tearing off his clothing. It was all very well whilst it lasted, and Laura and I laughed till we cried; but we felt



PUNCH'S TOILET.

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very foolish when it came to the point of going into the house, and announcing that no work was forthcoming

Shall I tell you of Toddy and Sykes? I think I must, although it does not speak well for the character of my favourites; still one must be an impartial historian. Sykes was a white bull terrier of a truculent aspect, a foe to all the cats in the vicinity of his home. He was not allowed inside the house, nor even to enter the gardener's cottage on account of a bad habit he had of constantly sharpening his teeth on the furniture. He gnawed legs of chairs and tables until they were quite unfit for use; so the gardener objected to his presence in his small domicile quite as much as did the lady at the great house. Well, under these circumstances, the only cat allowed about the place thought, that if she set up her nursery in the gardener's kitchen, she would be able to preserve her innocent offspring from the monster, Sykes. Alas! she was mistaken. Looking through the open door, he, Sykes, saw a

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charming picture of domestic felicity, which he forthwith determined to disturb. There was the old tabby mamma with seven sweet little babies lying on a bit of carpet by the fire. She was licking her children carefully all over, whilst they were cuddling up to her, crawling over each other, and groping about for her soft touch. The kitchen was empty, and the only sounds were the mingled mews and purrs of the pussies. Sykes dared not enter, but still he resolved to exterminate that family of kittens. What was to be done? He trotted off to the great house, walked up the steps, and looked in at the hall door; there he saw Toddy lying in the sunshine on a tiger-skin.

Now Toddy was a beautiful young lady Skye terrier, her appearance was captivating, her manners perfection, and her general character and disposition most sweet and amiable. What fiendish arguments Sykes used to persuade her to be his accomplice I don't know; but it is certain that, after Sykes had stood at the open door, uttering im-

patient little yapps, for a moment or two, Toddy rose from her tiger-skin, stretched herself, and at last joined the villainous Sykes on the steps. A whispered consultation took place, accompanied by much wagging of Sykes's tail, and at last the pair were seen to set off to the gardener's cottage. They were followed; and here I am happy to be able to state that Toddy evidently hesitated, but at length Sykes overcame her remaining scruples, and she entered the kitchen. The old tabby felt no alarm when Toddy carefully took up one of the kittens in her mouth and brought it out to Sykes—was not Toddy well-known to be an excellent amateur nurse, and most tender and considerate to all sorts of baby things? Sykes received the poor little kitten in his cruel jaws, gave it one nip, which silenced its weak voice, retired under a shrub, and despatched it. In the meantime Toddy had brought him another, which shared the same fate; and doubtless all would have fallen victims to this treacherous arrangement, if Toddy's mistress had not interfered, and made her

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heartily ashamed of her cruel conduct. For many days after that, if you said, ‘O Toddy, kittens!’ Toddy would slink away with drooping tail and cringing head, as if she quite understood her fault ; but as for Sykes, he was hopeless : the same words addressed to him would put him in a state of furious excitement, and he would rush about searching for them with clearly expressed intentions of instant annihilation.

Now, after these naughty little dogs, let us turn to the story of a beautiful, noble, generous doggie. He was not my own, but he was a great friend of mine, and so was his lovely little mistress. I can’t tell you his real name, because I know if ever his mistress saw these lines she would cry : so we will call him Hero. He was such a magnificent brown retriever, with eyes like yellow topazes. Sometimes their glance was as soft as a dove’s ; but let any one appear inclined to molest the queen of his loyal heart, and they would gleam like fire, whilst he looked ready to do or to dare anything in her *defence*. When she walked, Hero stalked solemnly

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by her side, supremely happy if her hand rested on his broad head: he thought it his duty to protect her unless she was driving, and then he raced by the carriage making wide circuits, but ever returning to say, by a joyous short bark, ‘I am here, don’t be afraid;’ his grand feathery tail waving so proudly as he galloped about the soft turf.

I have seen him breast huge rolling waves to fetch out a stick, and when he caught sight of his mistress (who was a perfect water-baby by the way) swimming in the sea, Hero would plunge in to her rescue, and insist on fetching her out by her hair, or the sleeve of her pretty bathing dress, quite regardless of her own wishes on the subject. Although he belonged to a rough race of dogs, Hero was as dainty in his habits and person as a young lady. Bread was his only food, varied by a bit of biscuit as a great treat; consequently he was sweet as a nut, and in addition to his sea baths he had daily fresh-water ones, so his coat was silky and glossy as any little girl’s curls. Poor Hero! it makes me sad even now to think of his end.

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He had been staying down in the country, a short distance from London, and had very reluctantly returned to the comparative confinement of a town life; the weather was very bad, snowy and wretched, and he could not be taken out for his usual long walks, so we noticed that he was rather restless. One bitter winter's morning he dashed out into the garden the moment the door was opened, very early, and after a few rapid circuits make a sudden spring at the wall, cleared it by a tremendous bound, and scampered off as hard as he could. By the time they missed him he was miles away, and in spite of placards and advertisements in all the papers, days passed without any tidings of our beloved Hero. At last there came a dirty, ill-spelled note, saying that the writer had seen the advertisement, and that just such a dog had rushed into his shop some days previously, in a state of great exhaustion and suffering, having met with an accident. We hurried immediately to the address, and I can hardly make you understand how

painful it was to ask questions each of which proved clearly that our poor Hero had first been exposed to cold and hunger, and at last had met a cruel death. We ascertained that when he dashed into this little shop—far away from his own home, but on the road to the country place he had left—he had just received a frightful gash ; blood was streaming from his side, and he kept making short snaps at the gaping wound after the manner of dogs ; but the ignorant people thought he was dangerous, and called in a policeman, who looked at the poor dog from a respectful distance, and immediately pronounced sentence of death against him. A chemist from next door was hastily summoned to execute this decree, he administered an enormous dose of poison, and in half a second Hero's sufferings were over. Our only comfort was to hear that his death was speedy, but we could not help thinking something might have been done to try to cure him first.

There were so many different stories about the way he met with his wound, that we could not arrive at

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any certainty. Some said they saw him run over by a cart, but he was so clever and accustomed to the streets, *that* seemed improbable. Another witness said that he had been seen to make a dash at a joint of meat in a butcher's shop, and that the butcher straightway flung a cleaver at him ; but the strictest inquiries failed to throw any light on this tale. Then a third witness described minutely a deadly combat with another dog, in which Hero was defeated and left for dead on the battlefield ; but we knew our favourite's strength and courage too well to believe that he could be vanquished in a duel.

At last we sorrowfully gave up the attempt to find out how he had been killed, and devoted ourselves to the recovery of his body ; but it had been buried, and we did not like to have it dug up again, so we contented ourselves with paying a fancy price for his skin, which had been taken off first, and with this melancholy relic we were obliged to return. But first we had to refund sundry small sums which had been expended for beer. Hero's death must

have caused quite a smart influx of trade to the nearest publichouse, for, according to the statement of our friend the tallow-chandler (whose shop Hero had selected as his refuge), everybody in the neighbourhood had consumed ‘a pot o’ beer’ on the strength of the event ; even the tidy mistress of the establishment had felt herself to be so ‘put about’ by the tragedy, that she also had required extra refreshment.

Hero’s successor, who was exactly like him in appearance, had an element of suspicion in his character which Hero did not possess. Upon one occasion, I was taking my five o’clock tea with the lady who owned both Hero and Brownie, when she went upstairs to dress for a drive ; but first she poured out her tea to get cool, begged me to take mine, but not to allow the servants to remove hers, saying, as she left the room, ‘Now don’t let them touch it.’ I nodded, and went on with my newspaper. Presently I stretched out my hand for my cup of tea, which was a little way off. A low deep growl

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startled me; there was Brownie, who knew me almost as well as he did his dear little mistress, sitting up on his haunches gazing steadily at me with an expression of eye which was not at all pleasant. I thought to myself, ‘this is all nonsense, of course the dog knows me; surely he doesn’t think I am a thief.’ But that was just what Brownie *did* think apparently, and he soon showed me that I was on no account to touch any thing on the table. This state of things was very disagreeable, for I don’t like cold tea, and I was rather thirsty. Suddenly there flashed into my mind the recollection of Brownie’s well-known love for bread and butter. I put out my hand for some saying, in a most conciliatory tone, ‘Good old boy, he shall have some bread and butter then.’ Up rose Brownie, terrible in his indignation at the idea of a bribe; he put both of his broad paws on my lap and growled ferociously, looking at me steadily, his beautiful eyes gleaming with an honest rage. He would not even turn his head towards the tempting plate lest

his resolution should waver. I tried again to get my tea. This time came a louder growl and a snap. Nothing would content Brownie but my giving up all idea of eating or drinking for the present, and I was obliged to console myself with the newspaper; but I soon finished it, and then I discovered that Brownie would not hear of my getting another. No; I was to sit still and not touch anything. At last his mistress returned, and Brownie greeted her affectionately, accompanied her to the tea-table, and then came up to me wagging his tail and licking my hands, and saying as plainly as possible, ‘I don’t mind having some bread and butter *now*;’ but I felt very much aggrieved and rather cross, for my tea was quite cold!

The most intelligent little dog of my acquaintance, however, is called ‘Tip.’ Good-natured people say he is a ‘fancy-pug;’ unkind friends declare he is a mongrel; but all agree in saying that such charming ugliness never before existed, and, as for sense and cleverness, his equal would be hard to find. Tip’s

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mamma is a great beauty, a true Japanese pug ; his father was a thorough-bred English pug ; but neither of his parents are as sagacious as Tip. He resembles his mother in the colour of his coat, which is quite different from that of an ordinary pug, being just like a chestnut in hue, and is as glossy and sleek as satin. It is not in consequence of Tip's own instincts that his appearance is so beautiful, for he hates his bi-weekly baths. If I say, 'Tip come and be washed,' he uncurls his tail, droops his ears, and sits up to beg, shivering piteously, and from time to time holding out his paw to shake hands, as if he thought that would avert his destiny. He really enjoys the most luxurious bathing arrangements, warm water, a good fire, his own sponge and soap, and a large sheet to be dried in. He emerges from his tub looking quite beautiful, but still he is wretched for some hours. When any one says, 'Naughty Tip,' he retires into a corner and sits up with his face to the wall till he is forgiven. He has a large and affectionate heart, but his entire devotion

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is kept for his master whom he perfectly adores. He will only sleep at his feet with his chin resting on them ; and, when he leaves the house, Tip is miserable till he returns, watching the door, searching every room for him, and finally welcoming him home with the most frantic joy. To children he is very partial, and perfectly good-tempered in spite of being pulled about by them. A small brown baby was lately added to the establishment where Tip's home is, and he is most absurd about this infant. When he is left alone with the little creature he guards it most carefully, and licks its hands and feet assiduously ; but, when his master speaks to the baby, Tip's jealousy is aroused, and he dashes about the room, barking, jumps up on his master, licks his boots, does all he can to distract his attention. Any one else may take as much notice as they like of poor baby, but his papa is not to speak or even look at him without Tip's permission ; and it is quite sad to see the expression of real suffering in his large eyes whilst the baby is caressed. It is to be

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hoped this feeling will subside, and his master is very careful not to wound his feelings by neglect. A few days ago Tip discovered that the servants had not filled his basin, which stands in the hall, with water, and that it was quite empty; so he took in his mouth the piece of sulphur which is kept in it, and trotted off to the room where his master was sitting, laid it down at his feet, and retreated to a short distance wagging his tail, as much as to say, ‘Pray help me in this little difficulty.’

There never was a more friendly and sociable dog than Tip, and he has a large circle of acquaintances among both people and dogs; but his chosen friend is a very handsome Gordon setter, ‘Royal’ by name. Now, although Royal is ten times as big as Tip he is not nearly as clever; consequently Tip looks after Royal when they are out walking, and is full of anxiety because his big friend will roam so far away. Tip only goes a certain distance, looks back anxiously, and tries to coax Royal to return; then, if the other dog persists in keeping at a distance, Tip gallops

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back and insists, by jumps and barks, on Royal's being summoned ; nor will anything else satisfy him. It is so pretty to see these two at play. Royal lies on his back with his four legs straight up in the air and his great mouth wide open, into which Tip thrusts his head, and you hear the bell on Tip's collar ringing half-way down Royal's throat ! Then Tip jumps on Royal and walks up and down his broad beautiful chest. As soon as this has gone on long enough Royal leaps suddenly up, and the shock throws Tip high into the air as if he were a shuttle-cock ! Then, as he touches the ground, the game recommences by Royal pretending to run away, and Tip scampering after him, bringing the big dog back by one of his long silky ears. After some time Royal's mistress says, ' Now, children, that is enough ; sit down and be quiet ; ' and they retreat to different corners of the room and lie down, panting. Tip cannot understand Royal's taste for ices, and when he sees his big friend enjoying himself at Gunter's with a ' strawberry cream,' Tip sniffs at the dainty, and looks up in his

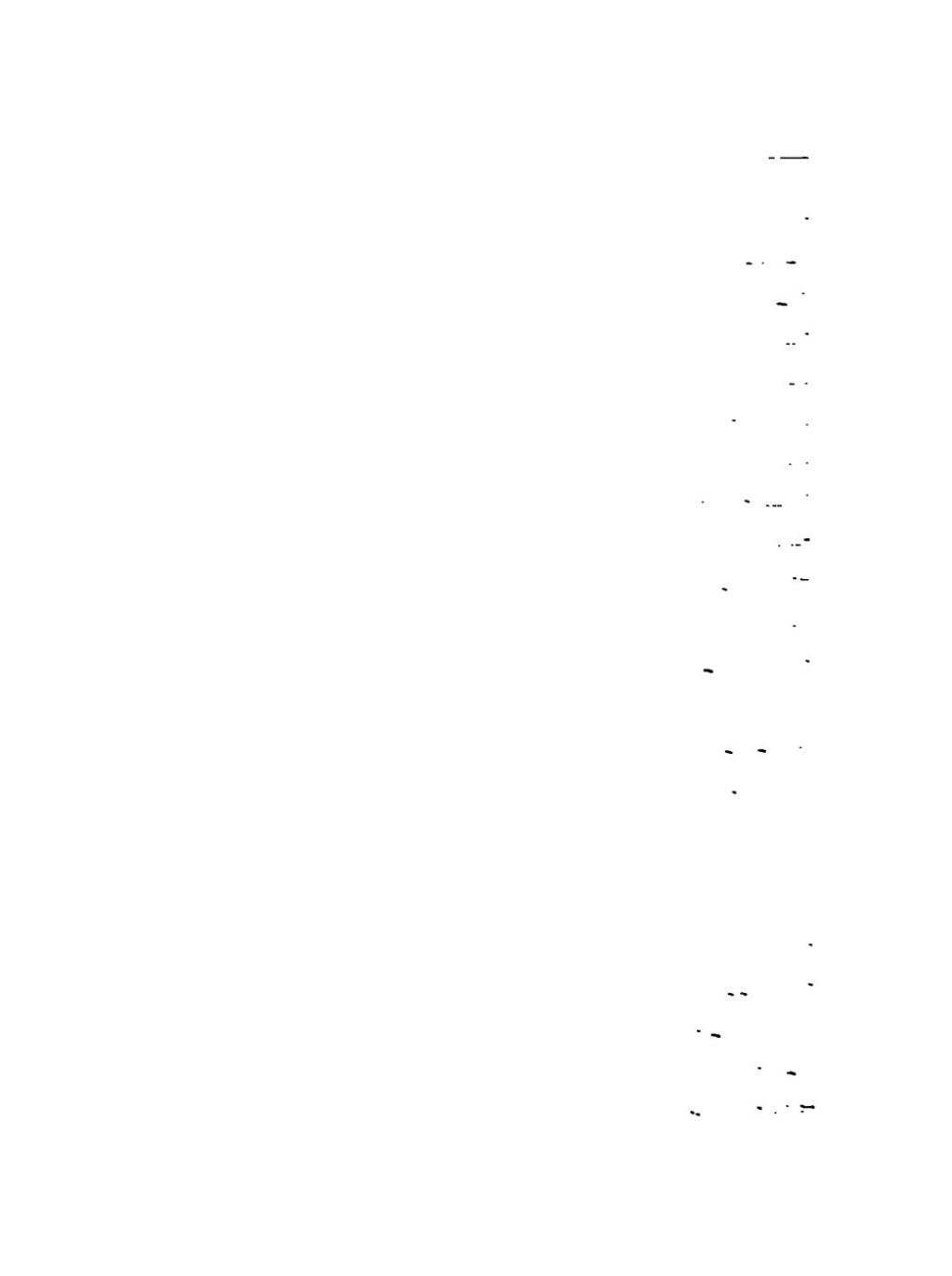
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master's face with a shiver of disgust, for Tip prefers warmth, and is never so happy as when basking in the sunshine.

I cannot give you a description of Tip's varied accomplishments, for he is always improving his education, and gives Royal lessons in begging, walking, 'on trust,' &c.; but he has one game of play in which he indulges when alone, and which is exceedingly ridiculous. He takes the end of his tail firmly in his mouth—and this is the most difficult part of the performance, as it is tightly curled over his back—and twirls round and round until he falls down from giddiness; as soon as he can get up he sets off again the reverse way, and he has been seen to go on thus for half an hour. Tip often makes journeys by the underground railway, which he hates, and, as soon as his master gets out of the carriage, Tip scampers off up the steps until he comes to the ticket collector; there he stops and sits down sedately, looking up in the man's face from time to time, as much as to say, 'It's all right,' till *his master arrives with the tickets*; as soon as these

are given up Tip knows he may pass, and sets off at full speed for the open street. The reason of this conduct is, that he was once stopped by a ticket collector and detained until his master claimed him : he evidently learned how to manage in future.

I must end this chapter by telling you of a narrow escape poor Tip had lately. His home is in a distant part of London, and he is fond of disporting himself in the square in front of his dwelling. Into this inclosure dogs are not generally admitted, but, as Shakspeare tells us, that ‘Nice customs courtesy to great kings,’ so all rules are relaxed in favour of a little dog who fascinates everybody in spite of his very ugly face. Tip therefore is allowed to run after his ball within the square, and he was thus amusing himself, much to the delight of his young friends, when a small pack of beagles passed by the half-open gate in charge of a feeble old coachman. The ball was instantly neglected, and Tip darted out to welcome the strangers : but what a reception he met with ; the whole pack thought he was a hare, down went their heads, up went their sterns, and uttering



tress thought it was time to rush to the rescue of her pet and friend ; so she boldly dashed in among the shrubs, and, in spite of furious snaps and snarls, and getting her gown torn into ribbons, she picked up her beloved Tip and carried him off in safety and triumph. Tip's gratitude was great, and he showed it in a thousand pretty ways, though he was so thoroughly done he could hardly stand. Whenever he afterwards passed any dog in the street which at all resembled his enemies, the beagles, Tip gave them a very wide berth, and looked at them with an expression which meant, ' I'll have nothing to say to you.'

Dear little Tip, long may he live ! for his life is a very happy one ; he is so good-tempered and unselfish that everyone loves him ; and he is not in the least pampered or indulged, consequently he is always in perfect health, and ready for a game of play. He has just brought me his little collar and laid it at my feet, so I must leave off writing and take him out for a walk ; that is what he wishes me to do.

their musical cry they cheyyed poor Tip round and round the square. Every now and then Tip thought to himself, ‘This *must* be all a mistake, they only want to play;’ so he would stop his career and turn short round with the most amiable expression of face, wagging his tail furiously as if he would say, ‘Now that’s enough, pax;’ but he was instantly tumbled over and worried, so he had to pick himself up as best he might and resume his flight. He never thought of coming to his master for shelter; he evidently considered he could manage matters alone; his mistress was frantic; she flew to the old coachman, and scolded him well for bringing out such brutes; but he was quite helpless and frightened, and only said, ‘I durs’n’t go near ’em;’ then she turned to see Tip’s master beating off some of the dogs, but one vixen had got Tip down on the ground and was choking him, whilst another was helping to worry him. The poor little doggie was quite exhausted, and seemed to have resigned himself to his fate. He was all over wounds, and his ugly *little turned-up nose* was a mass of bites. His mis-

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tress thought it was time to rush to the rescue of her pet and friend ; so she boldly dashed in among the shrubs, and, in spite of furious snaps and snarls, and getting her gown torn into ribbons, she picked up her beloved Tip and carried him off in safety and triumph. Tip's gratitude was great, and he showed it in a thousand pretty ways, though he was so thoroughly done he could hardly stand. Whenever he afterwards passed any dog in the street which at all resembled his enemies, the beagles, Tip gave them a very wide berth, and looked at them with an expression which meant, ' I'll have nothing to say to you.'

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*ABOUT BOYS.*

I HAVE numbered many pet boys among my kinsfolk and friends, and I am going to tell you a few of their pranks. It would not be fair, I suppose, to the little girls, to relate *their* pieces of mischief, for they are nearly all grown up now, and have boys and girls of their own, who would be very much shocked if they could know that mamma had ever been concerned in a small riot, or had nearly killed herself in attempting to fly down from a heap of piled up boxes, by means of large paper wings! I am sorry to say that my own chicks prefer the recital of their mother's wrong doings to any other tale, and when,

Between the dark and the day-light,  
When the night is beginning to lower,  
Comes a pause in the day's occupations  
That is known as the children's hour,

I am taken prisoner, held captive in an armchair by the fire, and not released till I have told, for the hundredth time, most of my own childish scrapes. Once or twice I have tried to substitute a little stray bit of goodness, but that was not half as popular as 'Mamma's naughtiness.'

One of my earliest pets was a tiny boy who would have been very pretty if he had not been disfigured by a black and blue lump about as big as a pigeon's egg on his forehead. At first I thought it was caused by a fall, but it turned out to be his own doing. Whenever he was thwarted or annoyed in any way he deliberately knelt down and thumped his head on the floor, even on that of the marble hall. I have seen him drop on his knees and hit his forehead against the pavement out walking, and the curious part of the story is that, although it must have hurt him a good deal, he never cried! He was not at all an ill-tempered child, but he was rather wilful; and if his wishes were not at once attended to, these knocks began and went on till he got his

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own way. The doctor said it was very bad for him, and his mother tried every means to cure this trick. In vain were all her attempts until some one suggested a little counter-irritation, and it proved quite successful. Whenever Master Willie dropped on his knees and began to knock his head, his mother produced a small light horsewhip, and applied it to his little bare legs with much vigour. At this unexpected treatment Willie scrambled to his feet as fast as possible; and very soon he would ask, before beginning to thump his forehead, ‘Is you goin’ to vitch me with dat vitch;’ his mother replied, ‘Yes, I am;’ whereupon Willie calmly said, ‘Den I wont hit my head no more;’ so in about a week the head-thumping was quite given up, but it took a much longer time to get rid of the ugly mark.

Poor little Willie got into dreadful trouble when he was about six years old, for sealing up his sister’s lips. They were both nicely dressed, and seated at the nursery table to wait till it was time to go down to dessert. The stupid old nurse gave them two

pieces of sealing wax and some seals, to amuse themselves by sealing up imaginary letters. But Willie soon got tired of this quiet play, and when his wax was flaring away he popped it down upon his poor little sister's red lips. She was looking at him in great admiration, with her pretty smiling face up-turned, when he suddenly dropped a quantity of blazing wax on her lips, and firmly pressed the seal down, saying, 'You shat (chatter) too much, miss.' Of course he had no idea of the anguish he was inflicting, and the poor child suffered almost as much as his victim, and seemed quite glad to be punished in expiation of his thoughtlessness.

I once knew two little brothers who were really fond of each other, but who used to quarrel most dreadfully. I must say it was chiefly the fault of the elder boy, who had no patience with his small brother Franky's shortcomings. Franky was devoted to Cecil, and would run his messages for him, and wait upon him in the most dutiful way; but he never got any thanks for his little services. One

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day I was calling on their mamma, and she took me into the dining room, to see a large and beautiful ship which had been just given to Cecil. It stood in a sort of wooden rest on the floor, and was certainly a very fine model of an old fashioned frigate. There were her guns and her portholes to open and shut, every block and rope was right, and her sails and flags were something lovely to behold. The only thing which struck me as being wrong was her crew ; they were little composition figures of sailors, very pretty to look at, but hugely out of proportion : fancy an A.B. seaman reaching half way up the mainmast ! However, Cecil thought it all beautiful, and walked round and round his new treasure with the greatest pride and delight.

His mamma took advantage of his softened mood to say a word about being kind to poor little Franky, and showing it to him, which Cecil readily promised to do, when the door opened, and nurse led in Franky fresh from his mid-day sleep, in his pretty white frock and with cheeks as red as his ribbons.

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His large solemn eyes opened wide at the sight of this splendid man-of-war. He walked round it two or three times with many murmurs of admiration, for he could not speak plain ; and suddenly, without the least warning, he sat down plump on the bowsprit, snapping it off close to the bows. Of course he toppled over, and came crash down on the back of his head, but, oh ! what a wreck he made ! So many ropes are fastened to the bowsprit, that when it is carried away in this sudden manner, the consequences are dreadful, and it is very difficult to repair such an accident. Cecil's wrath was tremendous, and it certainly was enough to provoke a more patient little boy. He flew at his brother, (who was howling loudly) with both his fists doubled, and would no doubt have punished him severely, if nurse had not snatched up her darling in her arms, and carried him off; but Cecil could not be comforted for many a day.

You must not think they were always quarrelling, for they never were happy apart ; and if one was in

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any trouble or difficulty, the other was wretched ; for instance, Cecil once fastened himself into a room by accident ; it was a long time before a locksmith could be brought to break open the door, and no ladder was long enough to reach to the window, so Cecil's imprisonment was very tedious. All the time he was locked up Frank sat at his door trying to cheer and comfort his brother, refusing his own dinner. Every now and then he would say, 'Never mind, Cis ; I'm hungry too.' And he looked quite faint and pale by the time Cecil was released ; but when he took him into the dining room, he would not touch food till Cecil had been helped and begun to eat. On another occasion when Cecil set himself on fire, and was very severely burnt, Franky kept making puffs at him as the poor child ran about in torture, thinking he could blow out the flames ; and I heard him say afterwards, 'I did try to blow him out, but the fire wouldn't be blowed.' He was such a dear little nurse to his brother all through the weeks of pain and suffering which followed this accident.

Frank was very anxious to be allowed to ride a certain donkey which was usually employed in drawing the mowing machine ; but the donkey objected decidedly to being ridden when his day's work was over, and always deposited Frank on the ground the moment he got into the road. Mr. Donkey walked sedately up to the gate of his favourite meadow, and then put his head down between his forelegs, hunched up his back—for it could hardly be called kicking—and soon got rid of poor little Frank, who, nothing daunted, scrambled on again to encounter the same fate directly. One day we met Frank a long distance from home, looking hot and dusty ; he was walking along the high road leading the donkey by the rein. We immediately asked if he had been thrown oftener than usual, and why he was walking. He disdained to answer us, and turning with a little confidential smile to his mother said, ‘Well, you see, mother, he was trotting very nicely, and I got off to see how he was going !’ We all laughed at this reason a great deal, but Frank saw nothing amusing in it.

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Frank and Cecil gave their mother a great fright one day. They were living in the country, and had a very quiet old pony which was used in the basket carriage. The boys begged that they might be allowed to ride this pony in a large field near the house. Now, as there was nothing whatever with which they could possibly hurt themselves in this field, they were permitted to do so ; but, soon after they started, a great clatter and noise was heard in the porch ; and, when the poor mamma went to find out what it could be, there was the pony without either of his riders, his reins broken, his saddle turned underneath him, and with a great cut on his side. He had evidently come to complain of the treatment he had received ; but I fancy the mother thought more of her missing boys. At all events I know she rushed out, still followed by Mettle, and to her joy met both her troublesome treasures in the lane close to the house, safe and well, but nearly in as bad a plight as the pony ; their clothes were torn and muddy, their hats off,

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and they were both crying bitterly. It seems that they were ‘playing at hunting,’ and, after several gallops round the field after a little terrier, who acted fox very well, the dog bolted through a hole in a high, quickset hedge, jumped the muddy ditch on the other side, and barked defiantly at them from the road. The ardour of the chase quite carried away the two small huntsmen, who put the pony at this big hedge, fully believing he could jump it ; and Mettle must have thought so too, for he actually tried, landing of course in the middle of the thorns. The riders soon scrambled off, but alighted in the ditch. The pony was firmly fixed in the fence, and struggled a great deal before he could free himself, which he did at last at the expense of many scratches, and the loss of his stirrups and reins. It was not surprising to hear that he declined to be remounted, and set off home as fast as he could.

One day, and almost before their poor mother’s nerves had had time to recover this shock, she

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heard a tap at the drawing-room door, and on going to see who it could possibly be, she found Fránky with a very pale face but an extraordinary polite manner, who said, ‘Oh mamma, dear, if you please I think I have put out Cecil’s eye!’ Was not that a pretty thing to hear? Poor Mrs. E—— flew off to the play-room to find Cecil crouching in the corner with the blood streaming from between his fingers, which were pressed to his right eye. At first she really thought his sight was injured, but it turned out fortunately that the deep cut had only gone very close to, but not actually into, the eye. Do you know how this happened? Through disobedience: they had climbed up to a high shelf and got down some foils (Papa will tell you what those are, and how dangerous to play with), and were fencing away in fine style. The silly boys had never put on the buttons which even grown-up people use when they fence; nor had they covered up their faces with the wire masks which were kept with the foils. It was a very narrow escape I assure you, and served as

a severe lesson to both the children not to touch forbidden things.

And now that I have told you of so many scrapes which these boys fell into, it is only fair to tell you of something very nice about them. They were the most generous little fellows in the world, and were never so happy as when they could give a penny or a bun to a hungry child, or a toy to a sick one. I was spending a week with their mamma about Christmas-time one year, and a friend of hers chanced to call. Mrs. E—— asked where she had been staying, and this lady gave us a description of a charming home far away in the wilds of Yorkshire. Its inmates were a young clergyman and his wife, and a house full of children. She told us how rich they were in goodness, in love, in self-denial, in all that makes life beautiful and noble. She described the air of refinement over the simple house, the way the elder children helped their mother, and how all were busy and cheerful and happy. There was, however, no money to spare for toys or picture-books,

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and some of the younger ones had never possessed anything of the sort. We laughed at her account of a sixpenny harlequin having been sent to the house by some friend, when, after a reference to the nursery history it was solemnly announced by sister Edith, the second mother to the little flock, that it was ‘Polly’s turn to have the next new toy;’ so the harlequin was given to Polly, who rejoiced greatly over her first plaything. Cecil asked how old Polly was, and seemed quite shocked to hear she was actually five years old, and that there were three children below her, whose turn had not yet come for a toy! He retired to a corner with Franky and they held a long consultation, which resulted in their leaving the room with an air of great importance, saying to their mother, ‘Don’t want us, please mamma, for we are going to be very busy.’

And they were indeed busy, all that wintry afternoon, mending, sorting, and arranging, putting maps together to make sure that all the pieces were right, finding the bricks belonging to a large box, and at

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last they came to ask their mother to go with them to the play-room as they wanted her to ‘see something very particular.’ I went too, unasked, and there was quite a large heap of toys, balls, carts, and picture books, all so neatly mended and in good order. By the table stood Cecil holding his brother’s hand and saying, ‘Me and Franky think we should like to send these to the children in Yorkshire, and do, please mamma, pack them up at once so that they may arrive on Christmas morning.’ Dear little fellows! how enchanted they were when Mrs. E. set to work at once, sent for a huge cake and a big box of barley sugar, and finally filled a large hamper with toys and Christmas cheer, which was sent off that same night to the distant parsonage, with messages of love and good will from Cecil and Franky to the unknown children who were so happy in spite of their independence of toys from a shop; and when a letter came back saying, in simple, graceful words, that the gifts had been received in the same spirit in which they were sent, and that the little flock had

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been made supremely happy by the sudden shower of presents, Cecil leant his head on his mother's shoulder and whispered, 'O mamma! isn't it nice to make children *comfortable*?' We all laughed so much at his idea of comfort.

But the pet boy of all my boy-friends lies sleeping far away on a sunny slope of the Himmalaya Mountains, and the myrtles growing so luxuriantly over his grave are meant to tell of the love which all bore to the man who, even as a boy, was never guilty of a mean or a cruel action. My darling little unknown friends, do not think that, because you are only children, it does not matter what you do or say. That silent voice inside you, which men have agreed to call conscience, but which is really a spark from a Divine fire, will always tell you pretty loudly—when you stop and listen to it—whether the thing you either wish to do, or have done, is right or wrong, whether it is true or false, mean or generous. Above all, think to yourselves whenever you are going to hurt an animal: 'Should I like a great giant to come



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and do this to me ?' And when the voice says, as it will, nine times out of ten, 'No, you wouldn't like it at all,' then don't do it. I have seen this pet boy of mine, though he was not at all quarrelsome, rush out into the street to defend a wretched draggled kitten which a big boy was torturing, getting of course well knocked about ; but, as in the struggle the kitten escaped, Georgy did not mind a black eye in what he thought was a good cause. I need hardly tell you how much all animals loved and trusted him : a homeless dog never failed to follow him if it crossed his path, a restive horse became as gentle as a lamb under his care. You see I put Georgy's behaviour to dumb creatures first in my sketch of his character. Do you know why I do so ? It is because I have never known a boy who was wilfully cruel to animals, or careless of their comfort and well-being, grow up into such men as I should like you all to be. It is only a very little baby for whom we can make the excuse that it does not *mean* to hurt pussy when it tweaks its fur ; but I have actually

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seen a mother, and a very fond mother too, pull her baby's fluffy hair to make it feel how it hurt a dog or a cat to have their hair grasped; and, after all, this practical teaching seemed to answer, for, long before her babies could speak, they quite understood that they were not to hurt any living thing which God has made. We know, both from the Old and New Testaments, how our Father which is in heaven takes real thought and care for His dumb creatures, for He condescended to make laws for their good, at the same time that He gave commandments to His chosen people; and you all know how our gentle loving Saviour taught us that His Father and ours cared for the sparrows on the housetop.

If a boy is thoughtful and good to animals he will probably be kind and considerate to his brothers and sisters; and then how happy they must all be together, and is it not wonderful to think that quite little children can help to make grown-up people comfortable by being patient and unselfish to each other? One of my pet boys used always to call that

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word ‘slefish,’ and his greatest blame of any thing or any one consisted in calling it ‘slefish.’ He quite understood what selfish meant, although he was not old enough to pronounce it properly. His name was Basil, and the great joke against him used to be that he never had any mind of his own, but required to be told by his favourite sister what he liked! For instance, at dinner he would say to her, confidentially, ‘Connie, do you think I shall like that pudding?’ and if Connie said yes, then when his turn to be helped arrived Basil said, ‘Yes if you please.’ I once knew of his having been discovered sitting on the steps dressed to go out for a walk, and on being asked what he waited for, Basil answered, ‘I’m only waiting for Connie to tell me whether I shall like to go to Highfield.’ Fortunately, at this moment, Connie appeared and assured him that he would like it very much; so they both set off as happy as possible. Basil and Connie are grown up now, and Basil has learnt to know what he likes for himself; but they are just as fond of each other as in the days when

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Connie was the queen of the nursery, and ruled her tiny subjects with a wand whose touch expressed as much love and gentleness as did that of the beautiful golden sceptre which King Ahasuerus held out to Queen Esther.

Now I think I shall tell you of a terrible scrape which one of my pet-boys got into. Pray do not try to imitate him however, and he would be the last person to advise you to do so, for he retains to this day a lively recollection of the penalties which followed swiftly on the heels of what he and his schoolfellows thought was a very good joke indeed at the time. It happened a great many years ago at an old-fashioned school for boys; Dick was the name of the hero of the adventure, and I never could quite make out how he came to have the performance of the principal character thrust upon him, for he was a quiet, studious boy, with a great turn for invention. However that may be, or whoever was the first originator of the plan, it is certain that poor Dick had to bear the blame;

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but, in order to make you understand all about it, I must begin at the beginning of the plot, which arose from one of the big boys, who was very popular in the school, saying, that he wished the big school bell, which always sounded at unwelcome hours, was ‘at Jericho.’ Now it was not possible to send it quite so far away at a moment’s notice, and poor Dick, who chanced to be next Burrows Major when he made this new and original remark, said dreamily, pointing to a tall elm which stood in the playfield near the house, ‘What a lark it would be to fix it up there, at the very top of that tree !’ It did indeed seem fun ; but there were serious difficulties in the way, for the tree was a very high one, and it was considered a great feat to climb up to the top, without being encumbered by a great bell, especially as its clapper was not one which could be taken out whilst the climbing was in progress, so every step was likely to be marked by a tremendous toll. Then, when once it was fixed up there, how was it to be rung at unseasonable hours ?

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The most submissive fag could not be induced, by either bribes or threats, to climb up and ring it in the middle of a dark night. It was early spring, but a few days of sunshine had brought the leaves out thickly enough to afford some cover to the conspirators, and now the weather had changed to keen and cutting easterly winds. Dick promised to see what he could do, and spent several days in making little models of a machine very like a gallows, in which, however, the bell played the part of the culprit. At last he announced that 'he thought he could do something'; when Dick said as much as that, everybody knew it was a settled thing, so the next step was to elect a Bell Committee, and their first act was to open an account at the village shop for wire, string, blocks, and pulleys to the enormous sum of five shillings.

It was necessary to proceed with great caution, so as not to excite suspicion in the minds of the masters, and as it happened to be the time of year for bird-nesting, the frequent sight of Dick swarm-

ing up a big elm tree was not sufficiently uncommon to arouse any remark. It is perhaps just as well that I cannot give you a description of how Master Dick arranged his numerous lines, and wires, and pulleys; I can only tell you the result, which was that one cold night, when a bitter gale from the east was blowing, the servant whose duty it was to ring the bell for evening prayers returned to say that the bell could not be found anywhere.' 'Nonsense,' man, 'said the portly Doctor; 'the bell *must* be there.' Poor old John went out again in the cold porch to have another unsuccessful hunt after the bell, and to return with the same story. It was too late and too cold to continue the search, so there was nothing for it but to go to chapel without the bell, and the boys were afterwards marshalled into their dormitories with extra precautions. Their names were called over as they passed the masters at the doors, and these latter remained to watch that each boy got quietly into bed. No boys could behave better that night; indeed they were suspiciously good, if

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one may use such an expression in speaking of young gentlemen. But the peace of the establishment was broken about midnight by a loud ‘Boom, boom, boom,’ from the elm tree. This unusual sound aroused the Doctor, who threw his window open letting in such an icy blast. There was no mistaking the clang of his own favourite bell; but how on earth did it get up into the sky, for that was where the sound proceeded from. ‘I see, you Smith,’ roared the Doctor, ‘you shall pay for this, sir, to-morrow;’ and he shouted for a monitor, who announced on his arrival that, whoever it might be, Smith was not the culprit, for he was snugly tucked into his bed. ‘Well, then, it must be Jones,’ shouted the enraged Doctor. ‘Jones, if you don’t come down directly and bring the bell also, it will go hard with you to-morrow.’ The monitor of No. 3. dormitory appeared to assure the Doctor that Jones’s snores were keeping all his neighbours awake.

In the meantime poor Mrs. Doctor was shivering with cold, and entreating her husband to shut the

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window and return to bed ; but the old gentleman was too much enraged to listen to her ; and every time the bell sounded, which it did frequently through the night, he jumped out of his warm bed, and flung up the window again calling out loudly, ‘ I see you sir, come down directly.’ He thought it safer not to mention any names. The consequence of all this exposure to a biting east wind was, that when the boys assembled in the morning, they very nearly got a flogging all round for the broad grin which saluted the Doctor’s appearance with such a swollen face. It must be very difficult to look calm and dignified if you have one side of your face tremendously swelled and red and shining. This was the poor Doctor’s plight, and his efforts to conceal his suffering ought to have touched his pupils’ hearts. I daresay their titters and grins did not really arise from want of feeling, only boys are such sad creatures for laughing at the wrong time !

The first thing the Doctor did was to make a long speech to the boys, telling them (as if the young

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pickles did not know it already) of the loss of the bell and of its re-appearance at the top of the tree, and urging them to confess how they had managed it; but a stony silence was all he met with, and each boy's countenance looked more hopelessly vacant than his neighbour's. When play-hours came the whole school was kept in to write a line of Latin verse so many hundred times over. This had a very sobering effect on the young gentlemen, and even the Doctor's expression of face at chapel with his head tied up in flannel could not raise a smile from the depressed conspirators. However, when midnight arrived, 'Boom, boom, boom,' went the bell, and it continued to sound at intervals through the night, but in a jerky and spasmodic manner, not the deep regular tones of the night before. After chapel the next morning the boys were called over before the Doctor, and, in spite of one of his eyes being now quite closed up, and his voice sounding as if he had plums in his mouth, his demeanour was so stern that the stoutest heart quailed. His address was

short but very much to the purpose. He said that, if the bell was not brought down in broad daylight and restored to its proper place by twelve o'clock, the whole school should be flogged, and all half holidays stopped for the remainder of the term. He gave them half an hour to decide, and full liberty to discuss the subject in the schoolroom without the presence of the masters. The moment he had finished his little speech, he got up and left the room, followed by all the masters and the monitors. I need hardly tell you how stormy was the debate which followed, or how soon it became evident that the funny side of the story was over for the present. Poor quiet old Dick saw the situation at once, shrugged his shoulders, and merely observing 'I'm in for a good 'un,' was deep in a few minutes in some fresh invention, the model of which he took out of his pocket and began to examine. At first the general feeling was, that, as Dick had not originated it he should not bear the punishment; but Dick

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himself scouted the idea of being let off, and was the first to walk boldly into the Doctor's study, and with a noble disregard of grammar, which even at that exciting moment made the Doctor wince, say, 'Please sir, it's me.' 'Me will catch it then,' was the Doctor's grim answer; and poor 'me' did catch it, and so did everyone concerned in the exploit in the remotest way. The boys declared that Mrs. Doctor was the most venomous of the two, and that it was she who stirred up her portly husband to go down to the village shop and blow up its mistress in no measured terms; but the woman's sharp tongue could not keep silence very long, and she actually stormed at the Doctor in return till he was glad to get out of the shop.

Do you know there is one rather solemn-looking gentleman of my acquaintance whom I never can see without laughing. I am sure he must sometimes wonder why I should always appear amused when I shake hands with him, particularly if he happens to have his pretty, young-looking mother leaning on

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his arm. I dare not tell *him* why I laugh, but I will tell you, in strict confidence, remember!

One day, when this Mr. F. was a small boy, he was locked up in his mother's bedroom, there to repent of his transgressions in general, and of some recent offence in particular. Now it was a half holiday, and there was a delightful excursion to the woods in prospect. All the other children were wild with delight about it, for they were to have tea in gipsy fashion, with a fire out of doors, and all sorts of pleasant things; but an edict had gone forth that, until Mr., or rather Master, F. had repented of his fault and apologised, he was not to be allowed to go in the spring-cart to the place of meeting. The hours were passing away, and his mother was very uneasy lest her pet boy should be deprived of his share of the afternoon's fun, so she thought she would try what her gentle persuasions would do towards softening his heart. I must explain to you that there was a sort of partition off this bedroom, and a glass door in it which did not fit very well,

consequently there was a gap of a couple of inches between the floor and the bottom of the door. Mrs. F. went close up to this, and began to expostulate through the chink at the side with her naughty darling. There was quite a little audience at her back, composed of the other children, who were eagerly listening for any signs of contrition on the part of the prisoner; and it caused great dismay when mamma turned her head round to the young ones and said, ‘I’m afraid he is not good yet.’ ‘Tell him to put the naughty pinnit (spirit) up the chimbley,’ suggested a tiny brother, who disposed of his little evil tempers very successfully in this way. Mrs. F. drew still closer to the door, and began a fresh entreaty to the culprit to make up his mind to confess and beg pardon; but at the most touching part of her discourse she suddenly jumped back upon her little listeners with a loud shriek of pain, and caught up one of her feet with many groans, hopping about on the other. What do you think this dreadful boy had done? He had found a

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hammer in the room, and when he saw his mother's toes sticking out under the door, he had deliberately knelt down and hammered them !

I need hardly tell you that there was no gipsy tea for Master F. that evening, and I believe he was afterwards very sorry for his conduct ; but it is not surprising that, whenever the recollection of this story comes over me, I should feel inclined to laugh. Sometimes I see Mr. F. taking great care of his mother at supper, getting her nice things to eat, wrapping her carefully up in her shawl when she is going away from a party, and so on ; but instead of admiring his dutiful devotion to her, this unfortunate piece of naughtiness recurs to my memory, and I cannot help smiling at the wrong time ; so you see it is very dangerous to do naughty things, even when you are quite little, for people are apt to remember them in after years.

*'EDINBURGH CASTLE.'*

THIS 'Edinburgh Castle' is not a castle at all in the first place, nor is it in Scotland! It is only a little mud hut on a hill, in the middle of a thick forest, in that beautiful island of Jamaica, about which I have already told you so many stories; but I did not like to mix up this shocking tale with the account of all our pets, so I have given it a separate chapter to itself. If you want to know more about it you will find it mentioned in a book called 'Brydges' Annals of Jamaica,' but I was standing on the spot where it all happened, when I heard the story from my father's lips. He, Jessie, and I had ridden for miles through

the clearings in this forest; and I can hardly make you understand how delightful such an excursion is on a summer's afternoon in these high uplands of Jamaica. Instead of the burning heat and hot air, which is called a breeze down in the plains, we had the most delicious fresh atmosphere; and, as we rode along under the shade of the tall mahogany and cedar trees, Jessie and I were never weary of admiring the beautiful creepers hanging in festoons from branch to branch; great blossoms of cacti, with brilliant gauzy-winged flies going busily in and out among the thick tassels which form the centre of the flower; orchids of every kind and description growing on the decayed timber, and making the shabby old trees more beautiful than the strong young ones; convolvuli of bright and delicate colour; slender tendrils laden with the sweet-scented blossom of the passion flower hanging down on our heads. Through all these lovely sights and sounds we rode, gaily talking and laughing, Jessie setting all the mocking-birds nearly wild by breaking out

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into snatches of song ; and no sooner had one bird answered her, and the others begun to take up the chorus, than she would change her tune ; then such an indignant chirruping and calling and whistling ensued, as much as to say, ‘Now, that is not fair, one song at a time ;’ until Papa said, ‘O Jessie, do leave those birds alone ; I never heard such a row. So, after that, we went on more quietly, and at last the track we followed led us to a clearing, and on our right was a little hillock with a tumble-down hut on it ; but what attracted our attention were some large grey rocks around the hovel, which at a short distance had exactly the effect of the battlements of a castle. We both exclaimed at once, ‘How like an old castle ! Who lived there ?’ And then Papa said, ‘Have you never heard the story about this place ?’ Jessie and I were quite as fond of stories in those days as you can possibly be, so we edged our ponies quite close to Papa’s horse, and listened eagerly whilst he told us this tale ; and I remember so well, as he went on with it, how all the warmth and glow and

beauty seemed to fade out of that summer evening, and it appeared to turn damp and chilly ; all the tropical luxuriance changed with our changed mood into dank overgrowth ; and even Jessie's smiles and songs died away into a hushed, breathless silence.

About fifty or sixty years ago, a man calling himself Hutchinson appeared in this part of the country, and, after looking about him a little, finally selected this forest in which to buy a section of land ; I think Papa said a hundred acres. Now it was very unusual to do such a thing in Jamaica where people generally have large sugar estates or grazing farms, and the land which Mr. Hutchinson bought was quite unfit for either of these purposes. However he gave no reason for his choice, but proceeded to cut down some trees, and to pile up all the available stones and rocks into the shape of rough battlements. When they were arranged to his satisfaction he built himself a small hut with a stable and outhouse, kitchen, &c. All that he did was extremely methodical, and, when finished, his new home looked

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perfectly comfortable and weather-tight. A few creepers against the cottage soon made it pretty, and his ‘provision ground,’ as the negroes call a kitchen garden, looked very picturesque with the yams climbing like hops over their tall poles, and the broad velvety leaves of his cocoa and arrowroot plants. His establishment consisted of one old negro slave, who appeared dreadfully afraid of his master. This was the more surprising, as Mr. Hutchinson’s manners were gentlemanlike and quiet, with no trace of ill temper on the surface. Inside the house, or rather cottage, everything showed signs of refinement. There were only two rooms, and visitors saw but one, which was used as a sitting-room, and contained books, mathematical instruments, a few curious weapons, and several specimens of birds and animals ; but the most conspicuous object in it was a large telescope on a stand, placed so as to command the road through the forest. This road was really only a bridle path, but it was much used as a short cut from one part of the island to the other, and,

though seldom travelled by the negroes, often proved a great convenience to some gentlemen who wanted to get quickly across the country.

Nothing is more amusing to a new-comer in most English colonies than the fine names the settlers give their places. I have known so many rough enclosures of a mere common or heath called after grand parks and castles in England, that the name of 'Edinburgh Castle,' which Mr. Hutchinson gave to his little mud hut with its rude parapet, did not seem half so absurd to me as it probably does to you. At all events it soon became known by that name ; and as Mr. Hutchinson was very hospitable and friendly, passers-by began to look upon it as a matter of course that they should call in at the castle and have a glass of sangaree (do you know what that is ? A drink made of madeira and rum, lemons, and all sorts of things) with its master, leaving him perhaps the last English newspaper, and telling him whatever little local gossip they could collect. But in the course of a few months three things began to be

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noticed and talked of : first, Mr. Hutchinson *never* left home, in spite of many invitations to pay a visit to his neighbours. At whatever hour of the day or night a traveller called, he was quite sure to find him in his house always glad to see him and apparently expecting a visitor. Then Mr. Hutchinson always betrayed great anxiety about the hour, which seemed rather odd in a person who had apparently nothing to do and nowhere to go. Another remarkable thing was the abject terror of the old negro. He would come to the door to hold the guest's horse, shaking all over, and he could seldom refrain from some little speech which sounded inhospitable, such as, ' It berry fine day now ; mas'r best push on, plenty rain come 'bout evening.' People began to notice that if they said to Mr. Hutchinson anything about his servant not appearing glad to see them, or willing that they should dismount, a strange dark look would come over his face, and he tried to laugh off the idea, or to change the subject ; but it was quite certain that poor old Pompey took much more pleasure in obey-

ing the injunction to ‘speed the parting guest’ than he did in welcoming the new comer. The most extraordinary thing of all was that Mr. Hutchinson’s guests occasionally disappeared! A gentleman would leave an estate on one side of the great forest with the intention of riding through it, calling in of course at ‘Edinburgh Castle’ on his way, but it turned out afterwards that he seldom got beyond that point. There were no police in those old days of slavery, and very little communication between places; so months passed before any one could be quite certain that a traveller was really missing, and then it was hopeless to attempt to trace him. Everybody agreed, that although Mr. Hutchinson was an odd sort of man, and that it was very queer of him to live in such a place, still he was the ‘best fellow in the world,’ and very clever and well educated.

At last it happened that a passing traveller, whose journey as usual seemed to stop short at ‘Edinburgh Castle,’ was expected very anxiously by his solicitor at an estate a few miles beyond the

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forest; and when a day or two passed without bringing him, the lawyer got anxious for his arrival, and thought perhaps he might have been taken ill at the last house where he knew he was to have put up for a night, on his way to the place of meeting. He therefore took the important papers, which he wanted this gentleman to sign, in his pocket, and started off to ride through the forest. Of course he called in at 'Edinburgh Castle,' and, like everybody else, was asked the hour, and, on his producing a handsome gold watch, Mr. Hutchinson set his by it, and became very pressing in his entreaties to the lawyer to stay. But he said, No; he could not possibly stop because he was in a great hurry to meet his friend whom he expected to find at the next place. Upon this Mr. Hutchinson's hospitable entreaties were renewed; in fact, they became rather like commands; and when he said, 'Well, you can't go now for your horse has got away,' the lawyer felt very much like a prisoner. He was, however, a shrewd as well as a brave man;

and although he said afterwards that he felt there was something wrong, at the time he pretended to give up all idea of going on, but in reality watched narrowly for a chance of getting away. The afternoon and even the evening passed without Mr. Hutchinson's leaving him alone for a moment; but still the lawyer hoped and waited for a lucky opportunity. All this time the old negro kept going in and out of the room and trying to convey to the lawyer, by a sign now and then, the fact that he would do well to make the best of his way out of the house. Mr. G. gave him a nod, just to show him he was quite determined to follow his advice; and he particularly remarked how thankful poor Pompey seemed to find that at last some one understood what he meant.

During the evening Mr. Hutchinson frequently asked what o'clock it was, and every time Mr. G. produced his watch he noticed how his host seemed to gaze at it, and examine it as carefully as if he had never seen such a thing before. At last Mr. G.

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said, ‘My watch appears to have a great fascination for you.’ These harmless words produced a strange effect on the man ; he turned first red and then pale ; and asked angrily, ‘What do you mean ?’ but, before the other could answer, Hutchinson left the room with some indistinct words about shooting pigeons. Mr. G. jumped out of the low window in a second, and set off down the hill as fast as he could ; but he had the presence of mind to avail himself of every scrap of cover, and these battlements did him good service as shelter. Under their friendly lee he skirted the mound, and soon struck once more into the bridle-path, with his face turned in the direction in which he meant to look for his client.

It was about ten o’clock at night—late for Jamaica hours, where everybody gets up almost at daybreak—when Mr. G. knocked with his knuckles at the little jalousie door of the ‘great house’ on the estate where he hoped to find his friend, and in answer to the cheery ‘Come in’ of its owner, presented himself in rather a muddy

and dirty state. Great was the astonishment of the hospitable planter to see a ‘white buckra’ in such a plight, and still greater was his surprise at Mr. G.’s first inquiry, ‘Where is Ferrars?’ ‘He left this two days ago to ride over to Friendship estate,’ was the answer; and then the planter added, ‘But what on earth are you doing here at such an hour of the night, in so great a mess, and without your horse?’ ‘You may well ask,’ said Mr. G.; ‘I’ve had to get away as best I could from “Edinburgh Castle;” and I’m certain of one thing, either Hutchinson is stark staring mad, and ought to be locked up, or else there is something wrong about the whole affair. He would not let me go on any terms, turned my horse adrift after I had securely fastened it up to a post, and then pretended it had got away; and he kept wanting to know the hour every five minutes, and gloating over my watch as if he expected me to give it to him, and all the time he had a much handsomer one himself. But what I want to know is, Where is Ferrars? He has never

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reached Friendship, and if he does not sign these papers to-morrow, they will be too late for the mail.'

Mr. G. said all this in a very excited way; so, as the first thing everybody thinks of in Jamaica is fever, the planter's only reply was, 'Show us your tongue, my good fellow,' at the same time laying his hand on his pulse. Now it is not pleasant to be considered delirious when you are only anxious, and Mr. G. got very angry at the supposition that he was ill; but it took some time before he could convince his startled host that there really was any cause for uneasiness about Mr. Ferrars. He can't have lost his way,' argued the planter, 'for he knew the track perfectly, and it is quite a straight path; he started early the day before yesterday in perfect health, on a capital nag, and with a beautiful day before him; he must be all right.' 'But where is he?' repeated the lawyer. 'I waited till the last moment for him at Friendship; if he were anywhere on the road I must have met him; there is no house at which he could have turned in except 'Edinburgh

Castle ;' I asked Hutchinson whether he had seen him ; he said Ferrars had not called in there at all ; but Pompey was groaning and fidgeting about the whole time in the oddest way !' The two gentlemen sat up late that night discussing what was best to be done, and the earliest dawn of the next day saw them in their saddles and on the road to Spanish Town. Here they had a long talk with the governor and one or two friends of Mr. Ferrars, which resulted in a hurried journey back again ; and so well had their horses carried them, that, before twenty-four hours were over, the whole party, consisting of Mr. G. and the planter, with the addition of a magistrate and a constable, found themselves at the little wooden gate which served as an entrance to the fortifications of 'Edinburgh Castle.'

Here everything was unchanged ; Pompey appeared as usual to hold their horses, shaking as if he had an ague-fit, and peering up into Mr. G.'s face with a wistful glance more like an old monkey

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than a human being. Mr. Hutchinson seemed rather absent, but was as cool and impassive as ever. It was a very awkward moment, and each wondered why the other did not say something; but they all found it difficult to give words to their suspicions and uneasiness. However, matters were brought to a point by Mr. Hutchinson's giving his usual hospitable order of 'luncheon directly, Pompey.' Mr. G. said afterwards that he felt an instinctive dislike to the idea of breaking bread under that roof; so he refused the offer, adding, 'The fact is, Mr. Hutchinson, we are very uneasy about poor Ferrars; he has been traced as far as this, but we cannot hear of him afterwards; we have brought a search warrant with us, and we call upon you to afford us every assistance in your power towards finding him, alive or dead.' Hutchinson stared dreamily about him and murmured his usual question, 'What o'clock is it?' Whereupon the magistrate struck in with, 'Oh it's quite early; lots of daylight left;' but the doomed man did not attempt to disarm the fast-growing

suspicions of his visitors, for he looked at his own watch, then opened a drawer and drew out poor Mr. Ferrars' gold watch and chain with the heavy dangling bunch of seals which it was the fashion for gentlemen to wear in those far-past-away days.

As if they had but one voice the three horror-stricken lookers-on exclaimed, 'Good heavens! Ferrars' watch.' And before any answer could be given the constable called out, 'Look at the nigger!' They turned their heads to see poor old Pompey on his knees, with uplifted hands, at his stern master's feet, crying, 'O mas'r! me tell you let buckra 'lone; me tell you him be found. Pompey savvy (know) dem sure come look for Mas'r Ferrars. Now duppy (evil spirit) catch us all, for we hab no more bisness in de kingdom of heaben dan my hog hab in de gubner's garden. O my king, my king!' The constable gave one stride and laid his heavy hand on the abject creature's shoulder saying, 'Now, look here, darky; what you have got to do is to make a clean breast of

it, sharp. We know right well there's been some foul play with that poor gentleman, and if you want to save your precious neck you just turn king's evidence, and tell us all you know about it, and we'll see you safe through the job.' Pompey seemed quite speechless, and only gazed with a despairing stare into the dark impenetrable face before him, moaning and murmuring, 'Duppy'll hold me.' The constable was afraid the old man would have a fit, and perhaps be rendered useless as a guide or helper to them in their sad search; so he picked him up like a baby, and carried him out into the sunshine; but Pompey quaked and shivered as much under the glowing beautiful blue arch all flooded with light and warmth, as he had done in the dark little room. As for Hutchinson he seemed to have spoken his last word, so profound was his silence, never to be broken again on earth, for people say he was perfectly silent at his trial.

The party held a brief and hurried consultation, which ended in their separating into two divisions. The constable produced the traditional handcuffs

without which they seem never to stir, at least in a story ; and he and the magistrate remained to watch the man whom they did not know whether to look upon as mad or a murderer, whilst Mr. G. and the planter went out to try and see what could be made of the poor old negro. The planter was a kind-hearted good man, well accustomed to dealing with his own slaves, who all loved and respected him ; so he undertook to question Pompey, and he managed so well to soothe and encourage the trembling creature, that at last he picked himself up and stood quivering before them, his face of an ashen grey colour in spite of the black skin over it, saying, ‘Pompey ’ll tell white buckra all ’bout it, dat best ting to do.’ But no words would come, so he turned away telling them to ‘come ’long,’ and led the way down the hillock towards a thick uncleared part of the forest. A very few yards brought them to a place where, on close examination of the brushwood growing luxuriantly round it, could be seen a little opening in the earth like the mouth of a well. Pompey set to work and lifted up the long branches

of supple-jack and other forest creepers which had stretched themselves across the space. Five minutes work was enough to show that the opening was much larger than it appeared to be at first, and of a great depth. ‘Don’t go too near, mas’r,’ gasped Pompey, struggling with a great flower-laden vine; ‘him berry slippy.’ The two friends went as close as they dared, but nothing was to be seen except a deep pit where all was inky darkness. ‘Man alive, you don’t mean to say Mr. Ferrars is down *there*,’ they exclaimed. ‘Eess, mas’r,’ said Pompey with wonderful composure; ‘Mas’r Huchisson him kill Mas’r Ferrars quite dead up dere, take him watch ’way, den Pompey drag him down here come night, heave him in; eess, mas’r, jest so.’

Few and simple as were the negro’s words they contained the whole truth; there was nothing to be added or taken away. That was just what had befallen not only Mr. Ferrars but many another solitary traveller besides. Their lives hung upon the answer to the invariable question, asked by Hutchinson,

‘What’s o’clock.’ If the unfortunate guest possessed a watch, his doom was sealed; he was detained at the castle on some pretence or the other, sometimes by almost forcible means, and murdered in the night, his watch taken from him, and his dead body handed over to Pompey to dispose of. The negro seems never to have kept anything for his own use except, on one occasion, a warm waistcoat, and on another a pair of boots. As soon as the day dawned again over the blood-stained roof, Pompey’s custom was to drag the body to the edge of this deep abyss, and after removing the creepers and branches which formed such a smiling covering to the grave-like shaft, he tumbled the corpse in. When once Pompey found his tongue, and perceived that no supernatural events followed his words, he seemed to derive relief from ‘making a clean breast of it;’ and I think we can all understand a little, what a comfort confession must have been to the poor sin-laden wretch whose superstitions had made him an accomplice in such cold-blooded wickedness. He now

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jabbered incessantly, and described with terrible minuteness how some were heavy and some were light to drag down that pretty picturesque path ; how he used to be obliged to call Mr. Hutchinson to shoot the victim's horse, for he could not find it in his heart to kill the creature he had fed and stabled the night before, and who had looked round on him with a grateful whinny when he entered the stable in the morning to lead him out to his death. Hutchinson taught Pompey to bring the horse to the edge of this well after he had flung the poor murdered rider down it ; and, whilst the negro held the bridle, Hutchinson put a pistol to its head and shot it dead, after which he would walk calmly back to the house and read, or garden or amuse himself in some innocent way, whilst Pompey huddled the quivering mass, which a moment before had been a horse, down this horrible place. The saddle and bridle and everything belonging to the victim was also flung down, and the branches replaced, until some other chance should

bring a visitor possessed of a watch to the fatal threshold of 'Edinburgh Castle.'

Papa lifted Jessie and me off our ponies, tied the reins to the stump of a tree, and led us to this well. I don't know why I should call it a well, for there was nothing to make one think it had ever been used for such a purpose; the surrounding country is well watered by springs, so the Carribs would not have been likely to have taken the trouble of digging to such a vast depth for water, when there was plenty on the surface; and the Spaniards, who ceded the island to us, certainly had not had anything to do with it. Just after these terrible discoveries people tried to go down the shaft in a bucket with lanterns and ropes, but the air was too foul, and they never could get beyond a ledge which projected at an immense depth, and where poor Mr. Ferrars' body was found. Below this all seemed a bottomless pit, and Papa told us that he had once gone there in the company of an engineer officer, who had attempted to measure it with a stop watch by

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throwing a stone of a certain weight down, and by calculating how many feet it had fallen in so many seconds. He was able to find out the depth as far as the ledge I have told you of; but the most intent listening with his ear to the ground failed to detect the least sound or splash when the stone was thrown perfectly straight down, so this terrible grave must have been almost fathomless.

Of course Jessie and I asked Papa a great many more questions, and he told us further, that in Hutchinson's bedroom was found a chest with between thirty and forty watches in it, many of which were identified as belonging to some of the missing travellers, but, as some of them could not be traced, it is quite possible that he had got them through the same murderous means in other countries. It was very extraordinary that nothing whatever could be discovered about this man's past life. There was a strong impression abroad that he was a Scotchman, but no trace was to be found of his having even lived anywhere in that part of the world. He had

evidently travelled a good deal, though, when the few survivors of his hospitality came to compare notes, they could not call to mind a word he had said which gave them a clue to any particular place. No persuasions would induce Hutchinson himself to open his lips. If it had not been for his earnest attention to everything which was said at his trial, one might have supposed he was deaf; but he never once lost his presence of mind, or forgot himself sufficiently to utter a sound. The counsel who defended him laid great stress on this silence, and tried to persuade the jury that he was what is called a monomaniac, that is, mad upon *one* subject; but I fancy people were not so merciful in those days as they are now, and the plea of insanity did not serve him as an excuse; he was hung in chains at Kingston (I think), in the presence of an immense crowd.

During all the years I knew Jamaica there was only one execution among the negroes, and the opinion I formed of them during that time did not

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at all prepare me for the news of the extraordinary outburst four years ago, which you may easily hear all about if you inquire. But as this execution was the just punishment of the most cruel and unnatural act ever heard of, and as I took an immense interest in the trial, perhaps you would like me to tell you about it.

Our house in Spanish Town was one of those built long ago by the Spaniards, and, although only of wood, was as fresh and good as when new. Outside it resembled all the others, being painted of a light stone colour, with bright green jalousies round three sides of it. This fashion used always to make the houses look in my eyes exactly like those out of a box of toys, and they were also not unlike them in shape. Inside, however, the old Spanish builders had left us the most splendid carved door and window-frames of mahogany, which was now as black as ebony from age, and the floors were exactly like a beautiful old-fashioned dining table, quite dark, and polished every day until they shone like looking-glasses.

When I returned to Jamaica after I was grown up, I used to think it the prettiest sight in the world to see a little baby-creature toddling over these shining mirror-like floors, clad in only one scanty garment, and with its lovely marble feet and limbs reflected as it crawled or staggered about. There was only one thing prettier, and that was to see the same baby asleep on its bright coloured straw mat which was laid on the floor, no covering on except the tiny cambric shirt I have mentioned, and lying under an extinguisher made of thin net stretched over a bamboo frame, to keep the mosquitoes from biting it. These were the little white 'piccanninnes;' but both Jessie and I had many pets among the black babies belonging to the servants. They were dear little creatures, so glossy and funny, always fat and good-humoured; and there was no doubt about their being clean, for the simple reason that they were always splashing and dashing about in the river, which ran a couple of hundred yards from the door. The 'Rio del Cobra,

or Snake river, so-called because it turns and winds like a snake, took a lovely bend just above our house; and, if I shut my eyes, I can see, as in a magic glass, the whole picture. I see the black grooms clad in white suits with bare feet and head leading the horses down to water. Some have already reached the stream, and the horses are standing up to their girths in the cool water looking the picture of enjoyment. A little higher up are some large flat stones, and on these half-a-dozen stout buxom negresses are banging away and beating our clothes, singing, laughing, and chattering the while. These are our housemaids, and every day, after they have washed out the whole house with the juice of the Seville orange and water, they collect whatever clothes or house-linen has been used the day before and march off to this river, where they remain till sunset, engaged in destroying the things, as Mamma used to say; then, whilst we are out driving in the evening, they wash the whole house out again. So you see we were very clean;

had we scrubbed and washed less incessantly, the insects would have eaten us all up, for the least scrap of dust or dirt served as a nursery to scorpions, ants, fleas, and all sorts of horrid things. But to come back to my picture of the stream. On its shore is a perfect flight of black children paddling about in the water, and enjoying themselves exactly in duck-fashion ; they dare not venture far beyond the shining shallows, for a little way out the noble river sweeps by with a strong resistless current. Its banks are fringed down to the water's edge with beautiful trees, whose exquisite green foliage shows that their roots are ever drinking from this fountain of their life ; and in their branches a thousand birds find homes, and add by their whistling and chirruping to all the joyous sounds on the river's bank this bright tropical day.

Between our house and the ‘Cobra,’ however, lies what is called a ‘grass-piece,’ or paddock, of the tall Guinea grass, which you will find mentioned elsewhere, and which brings me to my story. In this

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field were several fine trees, under whose shade the horses loved to stand when they were turned out to graze. It was a very common thing for goats to get through its strong prickly fence, and eat up the horses' grass, much to our coachman's wrath and indignation ; so Jessie and I were not at all surprised to hear one night what we thought was the bleating of a kid in the enclosure. At breakfast next morning we spoke of this, and soon afterwards Papa sent one of the men-servants to drive the supposed kid out. 'Duke' (short for Marmaduke) returned to say he could not find any trace of a kid, nor was there a gap in the fence by which one could have got in ; but as Jessie and I had been kept awake almost the whole night by the sounds, we knew we could not have dreamt them. I must explain to you that there was no other bedroom at that side of the house, and our morning rooms were far away, so we had no chance of hearing the noise in the daytime. Towards the afternoon we remembered our fancied enemy, and begged Papa to send some one else to see about it ; but, after listening some time at the

gate of the paddock, he said, ‘Oh! it has got out now, I think, for there is not a sound, and the men trample the grass down so much, that I don’t like their going in more than is necessary.’ We were obliged to confess that he was right next morning, for the silence of the tropical night, never very profound, had been deeper than usual. During the course of the next day, whilst we were working away very hard at our music and drawing, in the pretty shaded room which Jessie and I called our ‘den,’ Mamma came in looking rather pale and agitated. Before we could ask what was the matter, she said, ‘Do you remember that noise in the grass-piece? It was not a kid at all, but a child’s voice which you heard. Oh, the poor little creature! to have suffered such torture so near us;’ and then Mamma did what many of your mammas would be very likely to do under the same excitement, she sat down on a chair and began to sob and cry as if her heart was breaking; and Jessie and I were nearly as bad when we heard what had happened.

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A little way from us lived a negress of the most violent temper. She was respectably married and very well off; but neither her husband nor her children had much comfort, owing to her constant fits of passion. Mamma knew her quite well, and had often tried to teach her how wrong it was to give way to these furies. Whilst the lecture lasted, ‘Clara’ would appear quite penitent, and promise the sweet gentle ‘missis,’ whom everybody loved, that she would try to restrain herself; but she soon forgot or broke her word. On this occasion some ‘new sugar’ was wanted, and Clara sent her youngest child to fetch some, giving it a ‘quattie,’ or small silver coin worth three-halfpence, to pay for it. Poor Emmy toddled off with her can and her quattie, and performed her errand quite nicely; but unfortunately the can had no lid, and the sight as well as the smell of new sugar proved too much for her little principles. I wonder how many of us, big or little, would have resisted such a temptation? I should not like to say too much about my own honesty under similar cir-

cumstances, for I think sugar in this stage is the most delicious thing in the whole world, so we must be very indulgent in our judgment on poor little two-years-old Emmy. As she trotted down the shady lane which led to the village by the river-side, she dipped first one small chubby black finger into the liquid sugar and sucked it, and then another, and so on till, by the time home was reached, the can was more than half empty, and Emmy's smeared face and hands told their own tale of the fate of the sugar. The child was too young to understand threats or scoldings, so Clara's fury had no means of venting itself in its usual storm of reproaches. She was in one of her most wicked and reckless moods that day, and she led off the wretched baby (for she was not much more), muttering something about teaching her not to be a 'tief.' By and bye she returned without Emmy, but neither her husband nor the neighbours dared to question her. They supposed that she had gone with the child to her mother's cottage and left it there, which had been her

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custom if she wanted to get rid of it for a day or two. But what do you think this dreadful woman had done? She had taken her child into our grass-piece for two reasons: first, she had observed a huge ants' nest at the foot of one of the trees; and, secondly, she knew that the grass was in a certain stage of its growth when it destroys it to be touched; so the gates are fastened up, and the long blades of grass left alone to grow six feet high!

On her way to the tree she picked up a rusty reaping-hook, used by the grass-cutters for mowing the grass, and also a piece of rope dropped by them. We cannot tell whether she left home with this awful plan in her head, or whether it was suggested to her by the sight of the great black cone more than three feet high, where a whole colony of ants had established themselves for many a long day; but when Clara reached this spot, she used the reaping-hook to hack out a large hole in the middle of the nest, and into this she deliberately put poor unfortunate Emmy, throwing her one little striped blue and

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white garment down by the side of the tree, where it was afterwards found, and then she fastened the child securely into its frightful prison by tying the rope around its body and passing it also round the tree. It is supposed that the infuriated ants attacked the child instantly, and that their sharp stings overcame her fear and dread of her mother so much, that she probably screamed, and Clara may have thought her victim's cries would be heard, for she made a gag of leaves, and securely stuffed Emmy's little mouth with them. She then went away, to lead her usual idle, easy life, leaving the miserable child to what she must have known would be a certain, though slow and agonising, death. The sounds Jessie and I heard were Emmy's stifled wails. Oh, the poor little creature! I cannot bear to think of what she must have endured, although so many years have passed since then; but I have a vivid recollection of the pain which I have often felt from one nip given by the strong pincers a large black ant carries in front of him. Fancy being devoured

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by thousands of such cruel bites! and yet that was Emmy's fate, the punishment for a babyish error.

Her little skeleton was not found for two or three days as you know; the man who went to look for the reaping-hook he had lost made this awful discovery; every scrap of flesh had been eaten off the child's bones; and if they had been bleaching there for a century, they could not have been cleaner or whiter. Clara did not attempt to deny what she had done; perhaps she had the sense to know any such denial would have been useless. She had been seen to enter the grass-piece leading the sobbing baby, and its poor little shirt lying at the foot of the tree, with the smears of the sugar still on it, would have risen up in witness against the savage mother. Her trial was a short one, and I can hardly describe to you the state of excitement everyone was in whilst it lasted. She was hung early one morning, and I think I may safely say that no criminal in the world was ever greeted on the scaffold with such yells of execration. The

whole population of the town, and of all the surrounding country assembled in the great open space where the gallows-tree was planted ; and I am told that there was but one feeling expressed by every black or coloured person present, that no punishment was too heavy for such deliberate cruelty. Clara met her death quite bravely, and never expressed the least sorrow for her crime. The same spirit of sullen defiance, which she had so often indulged in during happier times, stood her instead of resignation or courage at this terrible moment. Her wickedness was the more remarkable, as the negro women make the most affectionate and devoted nurses, both to children and sick people. They are very clever in this capacity, and as kind-hearted as clever ; so it is no wonder that every negress in the island cried out in horror and indignation against Clara.

*THE GRAVE BY THE RAKAIA.*

I AM afraid this will not be a very merry story ; but I find that children sometimes like to hear a sad tale, and they will certainly learn as they grow older, that life is not all fun and laughter. It is full of stories as sad and as true as this ; but the bravest men have often the tenderest hearts, and so, perhaps, the boldest and gayest of my little friends may be touched by a tale of suffering and death.

One lovely spring morning in New Zealand I went out for a ride with my husband : he wanted to look at what is called there an 'out-station,' that is, a hut far away from the homestead, and from all the bustle and life which surrounds the wool-

sheds, sheep-yards, and accessories of a prosperous settler's new home in that new world. We left behind us the paddocks of English grass and clover, the patches of oats for the horses, my own little pet acre of wheat, grown expressly for my numerous fowls and pigeons, the garden sloping down to the creek, the young plantations whose growth we watched so anxiously, and whose enemy, the strong north-west wind, was on this balmy morning slumbering peacefully in his cave far away among the mountains. Going out for a ride in England is a very different affair from a New Zealand excursion. *Here*, you have only to coax papa to give the order to the groom, and then it is all settled; you mount quietly and set off (quietly also, I hope, though I rather doubt it). *There*, the first thing necessary was to catch the horses. Sometimes they were out on the run, and it took a man with a great stockwhip a long time to get them in: then they had to be brushed and cleaned, and at last the saddles were put on, and we started. I had the usual bag fastened to

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the pommel of my saddle, with a new book, the last English papers, and some numbers of 'Good Words,' or the 'Leisure Hour,' or the 'Sunday at Home,' for the poor lonely man whom we were going to see. The moment we appeared in the verandah, all the dogs set up a loud barking and jumping, each wanting to accompany their master, but only steady old Hector was allowed to come. Garry, and Queen, and Sharp, all pull at the chains which fasten them to their kennels, and howl dismally. Nettle, my little terrier, comes out in the verandah, stretching himself with a self-satisfied air, as much as to say, 'I know *I* may come;' but I can tell, by the coaxing expression of his brown eyes, that he has secret misgivings, and his worst fears are soon realised by my carrying him off to the cook to be taken care of and consoled during my absence. Then, as soon as the question about the dogs is settled, I have to make it known to the fowls and ducks, which surround me instantly, that I have no intention of giving them a second breakfast; and I have to elude the affec-

tionate caresses of the pet calves, who leave their favourite amusement of trying to pull the clothes off the line, to come and playfully butt at me. ‘Julia’ is getting too big for these games, and she tried to kill me once by running, with her head down, between my horses forelegs, just as I was mounting, causing it to rear, and throw me off again.

However, we surmounted all these little difficulties on this particular morning, and set off; the horses caracolling with sheer high spirits as we walked them down the paddock; Hector frisking about more like a puppy than an elderly colley of great experience; and we ourselves saying every now and then, ‘Is not this delicious.’ There is such a sense of freedom in the open country, such freshness and brightness in the feeling of the air; it is warm without being oppressive, cool without a chill. Before we had gone 300 yards from the house there was a wide creek to be jumped, and our horses were so clever that they always knew

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exactly where the banks were sound, and would not cross anywhere except at the place they thought best. As we cantered up the sunny flat which stretched behind the house, and wound among the low downs for miles, we startled hundreds of sheep and lambs who were feeding on the young undergrowth of *blue* grass which lay sheltered beneath the tall waving tussocks. The lambs were so wild and so strong, that, the moment they saw or heard us, the whole flock would make for the nearest hill; and I have often watched a tiny new-born lamb keeping up with its mother, jumping from rock to rock like a goat. I delighted to see them at play; if we rode very softly round a corner, we sometimes came upon a large semicircle of old sheep standing gravely together, just like mammas at a party, watching their children amusing themselves, and in the open space there were perhaps several hundred white lambs, jumping, frisking, and bounding about; butting at each other, running round and round, chasing one another. Our ap-

pearance caused a startled silence for half a moment, and then the whole flock would be off like a flash of lightning, amid much calling and answering from young and old, whilst Hector gazed in his master's face, asking with speaking eyes, if he should go and bring them all back?

We cantered gaily along till we came to the foot of a range of hills; followed the sheep track which led us across a low saddle, through another valley, across a higher range; and then we dropped down to the most lonely place I ever saw in my life. The downs, which we had hitherto crossed, were succeeded by gaunt bare hills stretching away as far as the eye could reach, rising higher and higher till the snowy range stood out sharp and clear from the glorious blue sky. We were on the borders of the 'back country,' a vague term used to denote the inferior land behind that which has already been taken up for sheep-runs. There were several thousand sheep probably among these desolate hills, but they had gone up to the

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higher ranges for their summer pasture, and the stillness was oppressive. Not a tree broke the monotony of the yellow tussocks, or brown and gray rocks, not a twitter or chirrup could be heard, only the startled cry of a woodhen, or 'weka,' gliding swiftly from its cover in a flax bush.

We had ridden for a few miles along the high bank of the Rakaia, a river, or rather a roaring torrent, gushing from the snowy mountains; our path for sometime had followed a narrow strip of flat land which separated the foot of the hills from the stream, when I noticed a little enclosure, close under a terraced bank about eight feet high. A few minutes' canter brought us to it, and then I saw it was a wooden fence surrounding a grave. On the opposite bank of the river was a settlement, or 'home-station,' and we could hear the dogs barking, and the men's voices; but these sounds only made the solitude and loneliness of the spot where we stood more oppressive. The bright sunshine did not even touch it, for the shadow of a great

mountain fell across and made the air chill. Involuntarily whispering I asked, ‘Why did they bury the poor fellow out here in this desolate spot, away from everybody and everything,’ and then F. told me the tale I am going to tell you.

A few years ago, in what is now called ‘the early days’ of the colony, a young surveyor came out to try his fortune in the new country. He was very much liked, knew his profession thoroughly, and got on as well as possible. He had just time to write home to the loving friends left behind, to tell them how happy he was, and how bright his prospects seemed in this fresh young world, when he received an order from the Government to start on a long journey to survey this very ‘back country.’ He was to be well paid for his work, and at each of the distant stations where he intended to put up, he was sure of the most cordial welcome. F. saw him as he was starting on this journey, whose end was here, and he described him as being full of health and spirits.

In those days any thing like an enclosure was

very rare, even near a house, and throughout his expedition the young man had many difficulties to contend with. When he reached a station the only way of securing the horse he rode and the pack-horse which carried the tin case with his papers, his saddle-bags, &c., was to tether them by a long rope, which was fastened to a flax bush or Ti-ti palm. Now the New Zealand horses are very clever and very cunning; they soon know when they have a 'new chum' to deal with; and these two horses were the plague of the young surveyor's life. When he awoke in the morning his first thought was whether they had escaped, and he too often found that, in spite of his precautions over night, the words with which his host generally greeted him were, 'Well, your horses are off.' There was nothing for it but to track them, and by availing himself of the experience of the older hands around him, the truants were always recovered; but, though many an hour was wasted in these pursuits, the early winter days of June found him

hurrying back to Christchurch with the materials for his report all collected.

He had reached a station about ten miles from this spot where we stood, and distant about seventy miles from the town. From thence the horses once more escaped; but a shepherd, belonging to the homestead I have mentioned on the opposite bank of the river, came with a message early the next morning, and said that he had seen two strange horses, whose appearance he described, feeding quietly among a 'mob' on their flat. It was a lovely, bright winter's day, and the surveyor determined to walk over the hills to this homestead, catch his horses, cross the river, and sleep there that night, making his final stage to Christchurch next day. His host promised to send his valise and papers down to town to meet him, on a dray which was just starting by a longer route, and the poor fellow set off full of health and spirits, with a crust of bread and a flask of cold tea in his pocket. He sent everything down by the dray except a little notebook, took a flax-stick in his

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hand, and with a cheery good-bye started fairly off, whistling as he stepped out. His host's parting words were an injunction to him not to dawdle on the way, and a warning of how soon these bright short winter days turn into a dark and often foggy afternoon.

That was the last glimpse which anyone had of poor Charlie —— in life. The drayman took his things down to town, deposited them at one of the rude little wooden publichouses which in those days were called hotels, and returned home. A week later people began to ask each other, ‘Have you heard anything of Charlie ——?’ No one had seen him since those friendly eyes had watched him round the corner of the last turning, and then lost sight of him for ever. Inquiries were made at the homestead on the banks of the Rakaia, which resulted in the discovery that he had never arrived there: his horses were still feeding in the sheltered valley where the shepherd had seen them. It took only a short time to organise a regular search along the track between the stations: this continued for

two days without even a sign being found to show that any human being had ever trodden those desolate hills. On the third morning, just such a bright, sparkling day as the one on which Charlie — set out, the dogs came whimpering and whining back to their master's side. Colleys are not of any use as sleuth hounds; they are only wise and learned about sheep; but they showed the instinctive uneasiness in the neighbourhood of a sudden or violent death which all the nobler brutes feel. Still there were many hours of patient search before the men came upon what was not far from them when first the dogs returned from their mad gambols to walk soberly at their masters' heels.

There, below this little terrace, which he could have jumped down without injury, was a weather-stained, rain-sodden body in Charlie —'s clothes. It lay on its face, and underneath it, safe and dry, was the little pocket-book: the arms were extended, and the hands much cut and torn; but what was more shocking than all was to find that *both* the

legs were broken. Rough strong hands, whose touch became gentle as a mother's through the magic of pity, turned the poor stiffened figure over and tried to close the wide-staring eyes gazing sightlessly up into the bright heaven above. Some of the party remained to watch, whilst others recrossed the river to fetch picks and spades. The short afternoon was hardly long enough to give time for a grave to be dug, wide as well as deep, for those frozen arms could not be bent, but, just as darkness closed in, the sorrowful task was finished, and the mourners returned slowly and sadly to light, and warmth, and the sound of human voices, leaving him who had specially delighted in all these things, lying in his lonely grave. After the supper-tea, with which a New Zealand day 'up-country' is closed, they drew round the fire, having first packed up carefully his watch, a lock of his hair, and a tuft of grass which had been held tight in one clenched hand, to be sent home to his relations. Before the little pocket book was added to the collection it was examined,

and was found to contain the history of those sad days.

The first entry, in trembling pencil strokes, was dated the morning after the day on which he had left the distant station ; it told briefly how the accident had happened. He had lost his way and wandered about all day. He tried to keep within sound of the waters of the Rakaia, as he knew his destination lay on its opposite bank, and at last to his great joy he saw the lights and heard the sounds of a homestead. A more experienced traveller would have ‘camped’ under a flax bush and ‘coo-éd,’ or waited till the moon rose, or in fact done anything but what poor Charlie did, which was to hurry on, tired and foot-sore, through the pitchy darkness, stumbling at every second step, till he walked *over* the short but abrupt descent beneath which his poor body was found. He wrote at first with hope ; he said he had waited for a gleam of light to see where he was, for he found he could not move either of his legs ; he felt them snap like sticks, he wrote ;

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but he meant to try and drag himself up the little terrace so as to be more easily seen, and he must have made the attempt by the state of his hands and clothes. There was only one more intelligible and connected entry dated the next day. He had spent all the intervening hours in trying to better his position, and to attract the attention of those on the other side of the river. He trusted to a shepherd passing on his way to a boundary ; alas ! the river was sufficient boundary for miles along its banks, and no shepherd was likely to come that way. He wrote that he had shrieked and screamed for help till his voice was quite gone ; that the anguish he endured made him pray for a speedy death ; and that, before the night, whose piercing cold he felt sure he could not again survive, he intended to exert all his remaining strength to turn over on his face, partly to keep the book dry in his breast, partly to prevent the hawks from tearing out his eyes. Then came a few words saying, he had suffered much from thirst, an adieu to his mother more pathetic in its brief good night

than pages of leave-taking, a prayer for a speedy end to his life of torture, and his initials scrawled over the page. Soon after tracing these he must have died.

I heard of one more such accident whilst I was in New Zealand, and that was to a poor shepherd who went to give what is called a ‘drafting notice’ to the next run. You are obliged to send and tell all your neighbours when you muster your sheep, at shearing and other times, so that any which may have strayed on to your feeding grounds may be claimed by their rightful owners. Each sheep has a device stamped on it every year after it has been shorn ; this is called the ‘brand ;’ besides which a little mark is put on each ear, so you can easily tell your own sheep at a glance ; indeed, I have heard of a celebrated colley, who was supposed to know his master’s brand, and to be able to pick the sheep belonging to him out of a mixed mob ! Well, this shepherd, ‘Joe’ by name, never came back ; but it happened that just then there was a great rush to some wonderful Gold

fields near, and it was no uncommon thing for a shepherd to go out in the morning, and, instead of returning, send a message to say he had gone to the diggings; so, although no such message came from Joe, his master never doubted but that he had started to look for a fortune in the wintry torrent of a New Zealand river.

Months afterwards a lad was eel-fishing in a creek which ran between the two stations, and as he strolled along its banks looking for a deep hole wherein to cast his simple tackle—a few yards of strong twine and a large hook, baited with a bit of mutton—he came to a new place where the banks had been washed away by a recent heavy fresh, and a splendid basin formed. Here he prepared to throw in a line, fasten it to a flax bush, and then go on to search for another favourable spot. The water was clear, and on the shining shingle which paved the little pool he saw some white bones. At first he thought of a missing bullock of his father's, and laying down at the edge of the stream, with a flax stick

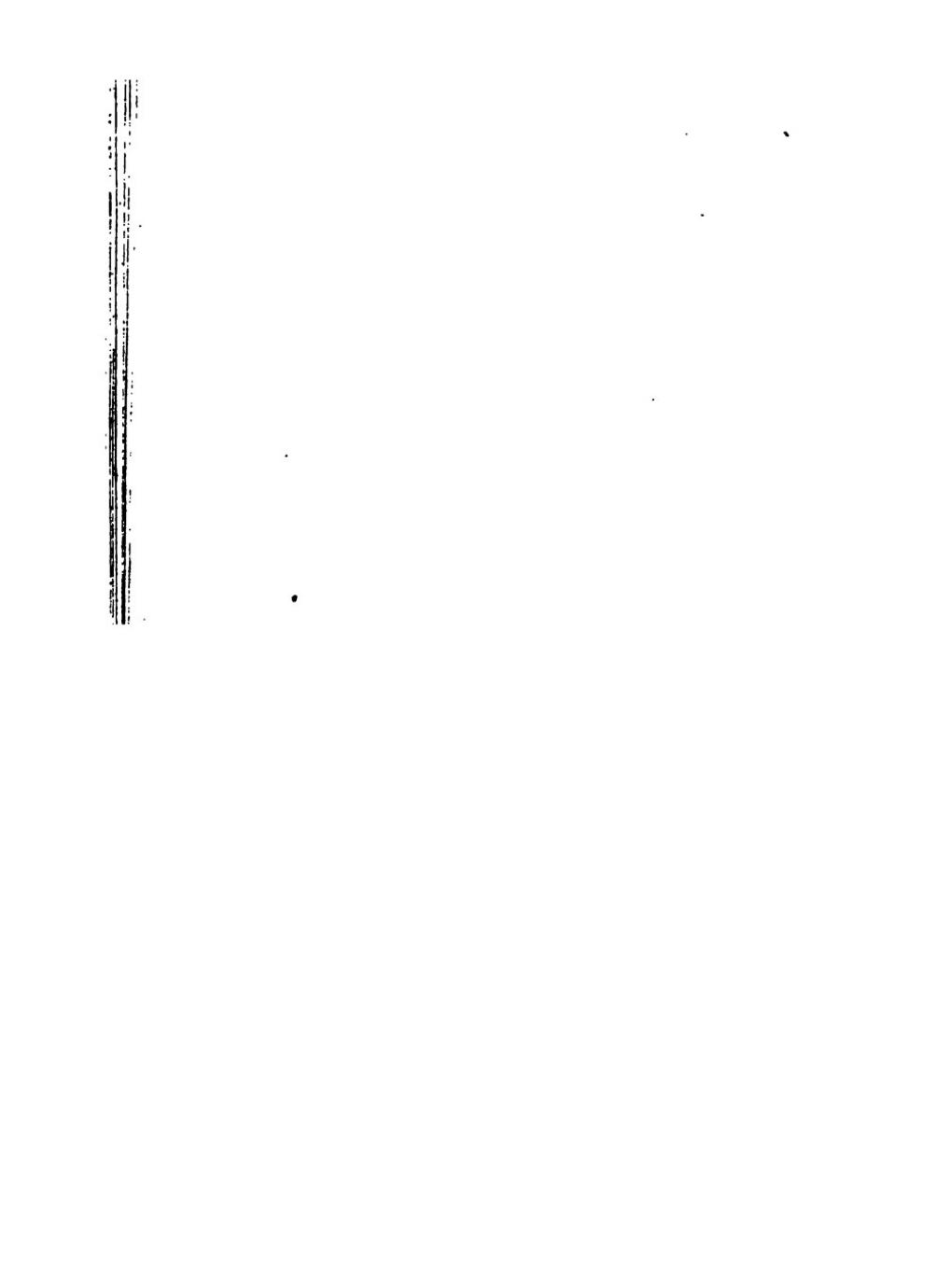
in his hand, he tried to drag or push the bones into a shallow place where he could reach them, but to his horror, the weight of his own body leaning on an overhanging bush seemed to dislodge some more bones, which had caught in its thick branches, and first a skeleton hand, and then a foot, dropped into the bright sparkling water. The boy told me the story himself, and described very simply and forcibly how he had felt as if the whole thing was a ghastly dream ; for in New Zealand one is seldom brought face to face with anything worse than a lamb which has met with an untimely fate ; and to this boy, who had left England as a child, and lived a free pastoral life, almost removed from the knowledge of death, these grim bones were very dreadful.

He stood in perplexity wondering if he could find his way back again exactly to the same spot, when his eye was caught by a fluttering rag on a thorny shrub near. He disentangled it and examined it carefully, and then there flashed upon his mind, the distinct recollection of Joe the shepherd having worn

a flannel shirt of this peculiar kind, for he well remembered having 'chaffed' him about its staring pattern of brown foxes' heads on a scarlet ground. He quickly returned for help to the home station, and that evening poor Joe's remains were collected in an empty flour sack, and buried by the side of the stream. His skull, easily recognised by a peculiar enormous tooth, of which he was very proud as being a sort of *lusus naturæ*, was higher up on the steep hill-side, and his tobacco-pouch and pipe were found a little way off. It was then remembered that the evening he left for home a dense and sudden fog had come on, and, as he was found far from the right track, he must have lost his way, made a false step in the dark, and probably broken his neck. He must at any rate have so injured himself by a fall, as to be incapable of moving, for otherwise there was no reason why he should not have waited till morning and then retraced his steps.

This story was told to me on my asking why a

certain hill, which I very often passed in my rides, was called ‘Golgotha.’ The shepherds had given it that name ever since the discovery of poor Joe’s skull on its pathless and slippery sides.



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